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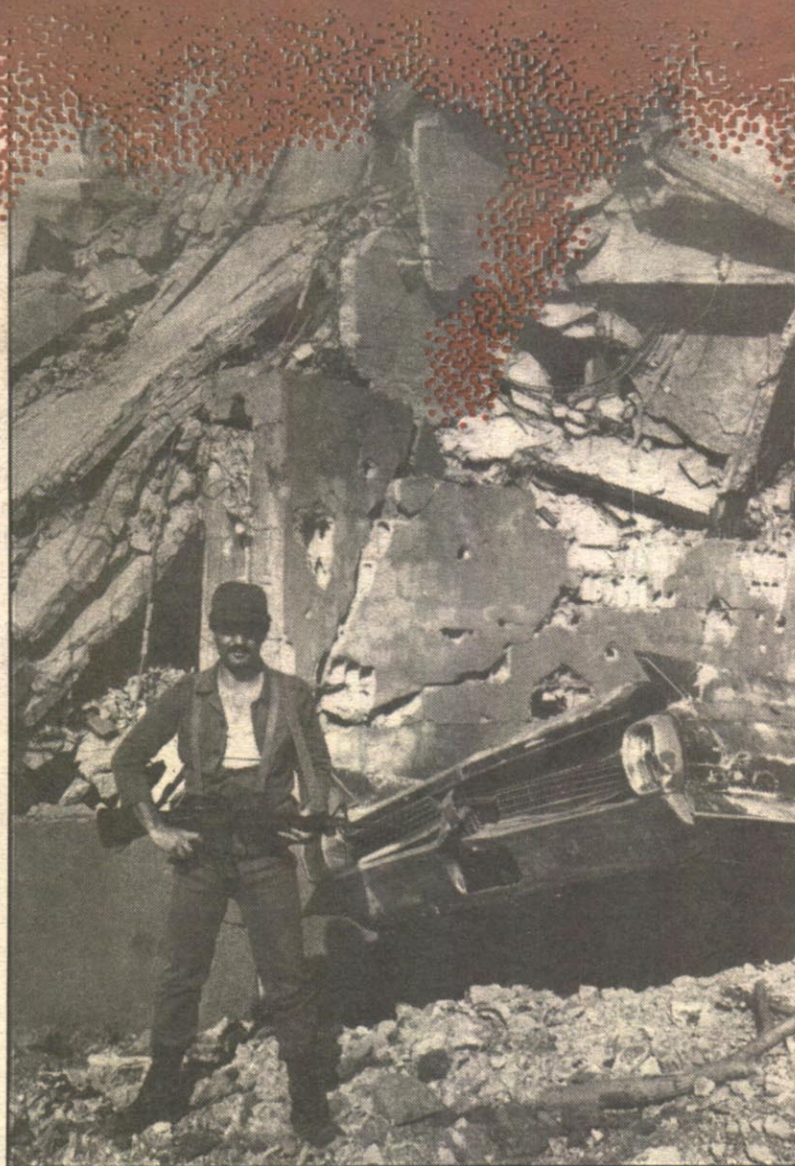
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NOTES FROM THE PLANET BEIRUT

BY DANIEL LAZARE

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19,000 warheads and nowhere to shoot them

By David C. Morrison

In 1979, at the behest of the Pentagon's macabre Defense Nuclear Agency, a southern California think tank drafted a list of Strangelovian alternatives for targeting nuclear weapons on the Soviet Union.

Among other novel notions, the think tank proposed that the U.S. Strategic Air Command (SAC) "avoid destroying the Soviet central management of economic processes, because this management actually holds their economy back and thereby helps us in the worldwide power struggle." It also called for "an 'ethnically conscious' American targeting policy designed to strengthen the minorities in the USSR against the domination of the Great Russians," and the zapping of "monuments, KGB headquarters, etc."

Only a dozen years later, with no assistance at all from SAC, the sclerotic Soviet command economy has collapsed, minority republics are shrugging off Moscow's rule and the Soviet people are demolishing monuments to Leninism with far greater efficiency than any cruise missile could—and with far less "collateral damage."

Now that the Soviet Union's hardliners have been overthrown, the long geopolitical struggle between the U.S. and the USSR is finally fodder for the history books. But what will become of the sprawling atomic architectures that the superpowers erected in the service of that struggle? After more than 40 years of furious arms racing, it is exceedingly difficult for official Washington to contemplate, much less enter, the promised land now lying over the horizon.

Lethal legacy: "With the lodestar being removed here, we're not sure how to conduct ourselves without it and rationalize these weapons' existence," says Stan Norris, a nuclear weapons analyst with the Natural Resources Defense Council in Washington and co-author of the *Nuclear Weapons Databook* series. "There's a great deal of inertia here, and it is hard to take decades of rhetoric and somehow create a new compass. We're going to need our own version of perestroika to take apart this giant construct and do something different with thousands of people's jobs and hundreds of billions of dollars. And that won't be done overnight."

Nor was this lethal legacy created overnight. Since 1945, the U.S. has churned out roughly 60,000 atomic warheads, 19,000 of which remain in service. After detonating their first nuclear weapon in 1949, the Soviets have produced some 45,000 nukes, more than 27,000 of which

are still deployed.

Bush administration officials have taken to observing pointedly that the Soviet Union is still the only country that can destroy the U.S. within 30 minutes. Well, not necessarily. Armed with 100 submarine-launched missile warheads, Great Britain could also devastate its one-time North American colony—were it of a mind to do so. For that matter, France could inflict four times as much damage as the British. And it could fairly be said that Washington today enjoys better relations with Moscow than it ever has with prickly Paris.

As relations with the Russians improve, U.S. expenditures on strategic weapons become increasingly difficult to defend. A panel of defense and arms-control experts assembled by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) acknowledged as much in an early September report on the future of nuclear weapons. "If the day comes that the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union is like the relationship between the United States and its Western European allies," the report stated, "no nuclear weapons will be needed to deter the Soviet Union."

Of course, the U.S. is still a long way from eliminating its nuclear arsenal. The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) now awaiting approval by U.S. and Soviet legislators would leave each nation with at least 7,000-9,000 long-range warheads. Even a theoretical START II pact proposed by the NAS panel would allow the two nations 3,000-4,000 atomic explosives. The NAS panel noted, however, that "as world conditions permit," U.S. strategic forces could in time be reduced to 1,000-2,000 nuclear warheads.

Such numbers would roll the nuclear arms race back a good four decades. Just don't hold your breath. "I could get excited about a treaty bringing us down to 1,000 [warheads]," says Council for a Livable World Executive Director John D. Isaacs, one of the most prominent arms-control lobbyists in Washington. "But I don't see that happening with the Bush administration when they don't even want to stop nuclear testing."

Deep weapons cutbacks would also obviate administration plans for a new \$5.6 billion nuclear reactor to produce tritium, a short-lived radioactive gas essential to modern warheads. A smaller nuclear force "would assure that the present tritium holdings suffice for several decades," the NAS panel said, even though tritium decays at a rate of 5.5 percent annually.

Modest proposals: Though official Washington remains cautious, "it's increasingly respectable to talk about a 'minimum deterrent' solution," says Jack Mendelsohn, deputy director of the Arms Control Association, a liberal policy group. "The problem is that there is no objective force level that provides deterrence. It tends to be in the eye of the beholder. But, remember, Kennedy was deterred during the Cuban missile crisis by only 50 [long-range] nuclear weapons in the Soviet Union."

These days, calls for a much smaller U.S. nuclear arsenal don't issue solely from liberal throats such as Mendelsohn's. In a recent interview, John McCain of Arizona, a Republican stalwart on the Senate Armed Services Committee, said "Not only do I think there's an opportunity for dramatic reductions, I'm convinced there is a clear and compelling case for the elimination of programs such as Midgetman and other mobile systems." McCain asserted "that in order to give credibility to our efforts at addressing the issue of the 1990s, which is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, [we must] reduce our stocks dramatically."

The official U.S. nuclear posture has already undergone some change—privately characterized by a long-time Pentagon nuclear consultant as "fairly modest." In March, SAC targeters offered a new war-fighting plan that reflects the dramatic political changes in Eastern Europe, eliminating as many as 3,000 potential targets from a list that had numbered more than 10,000. But that still leaves 7,000 "designated ground zeros" in a Russia that now professes friendly relations with the U.S.

SAC's new chief, Gen. G. Lee Butler, meanwhile, is trying to avoid funding cuts while adjusting to a world in which planning for Armageddon looms less prominently on his command's horizon. In congressional testimony this spring, Butler downplayed SAC's nuclear role and promoted its "inherent but heretofore less-emphasized ... conventional war-fighting" capabilities. Butler is removing the

word "strategic" from SAC's missile wings and "bombardment" from the bomber and tanker units.

Other military programs are undergoing a rhetorical retrofit to survive in a post-Cold War world. The B-2 bomber, once sold on the basis of its ostensible ability to track and kill mobile Soviet missiles, is now justified largely as a jumbo follow-on to the non-nuclear F-117A stealth aircraft that hammered Iraqi targets in the Persian Gulf War.

There have been other minor relaxations of the vigilant hairtrigger that once governed U.S. nuclear forces. In July 1990, SAC opted to save \$23 million annually by grounding its fleet of "Looking Glass" command and control aircraft. Since 1961, one of these electronics-packed Boeing 707s had continuously orbited over the central United States, where it could evade a Soviet surprise attack and order the firing of a devastating nuclear counterbarrage. Now these planes will sit on ground alert at SAC headquarters in Omaha.

Explosive change? Despite such operational cutbacks, the Defense Budget Project, a Washington-based public-interest group, pegs the cost of completing planned U.S. strategic offensive weapons projects—including the B-2 bomber, the Advanced Cruise Missile, the Trident II sub-

INSIDE STORY

launched missile and the mobile Midgetman missile—at \$89.6 billion. This would come on top of \$81.8 billion already spent on these programs. Not surprisingly, pressure is mounting in Washington for more dramatic cuts. No less surprising, security officials on the Bush team are adamant about standing pat.

Early this year, the Energy Department, which builds atomic explosives for Defense, reported to Congress on options for "reconfiguring" its decrepit and contaminated nuclear weapons production facilities. Among the scenarios contemplated was a future U.S. arsenal only 15 percent of its current size—containing about 3,000 weapons. But in an August interview, U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Director Ronald F. Lehman II said there was no appetite in the administration for anything approaching a minimum deterrent. "And I don't think there should be any interest, at least in the context of any immediate first steps," he insisted. "The world is changing in important ways, but it hasn't so changed that the importance of maintaining a strong strategic nuclear deterrent has gone away."

As the Soviet Union struggles to reinvent itself—frantically pulling its nuclear weapons out of seceding republics in the process—a remarkable window of opportunity has opened for truly breathtaking reductions in nuclear weapons. But the future is uncertain, and this window will not remain ajar indefinitely. The debate over how the U.S. government should address this burning issue will be only one fight among many in the months and years to come as the military-industrial-congressional complex struggles to cope with the complete collapse of the Cold War paradigm that has for so long guided its hand.

"We've got this smug sense of superiority about the Soviets having lost the Cold War and helping them to adjust to the changes," a Pentagon weapons analyst observed wryly. "But we've got a lot of the same problems."

David C. Morrison is a national security correspondent for *National Journal* in Washington, D.C.

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By Jim Wurst

IRONICALLY, 1991'S TWO MAJOR MILITARY OPERATIONS—the Persian Gulf War and the failed putsch in the Soviet Union—may have established promising new trends for the future of global disarmament. The Gulf War showed the danger of playing fast and loose with the world's arms trade and the putsch showed a weakened Soviet Union must be a disarmed one. Both events proved conclusively that the Cold War has been eclipsed as the defining factor in military equations.

To ensure stability, all countries—not just Iraq and the Soviet Union—must draw down their nuclear and conventional forces, halt the spread of arms and agree to ban various classes of weapons. In other words, world leaders must adopt the policies advocated by the peace movement for more than a decade and by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov for the past three years.

The Cold War thaw has made room for new arms-control initiatives in some of the world's most troubled regions. And since the Persian Gulf crisis, it has become increasingly clear that the U.S./Soviet monopoly over arms control is giving way to other national—and, more importantly, regional—initiatives that are now setting the arms-control agenda.

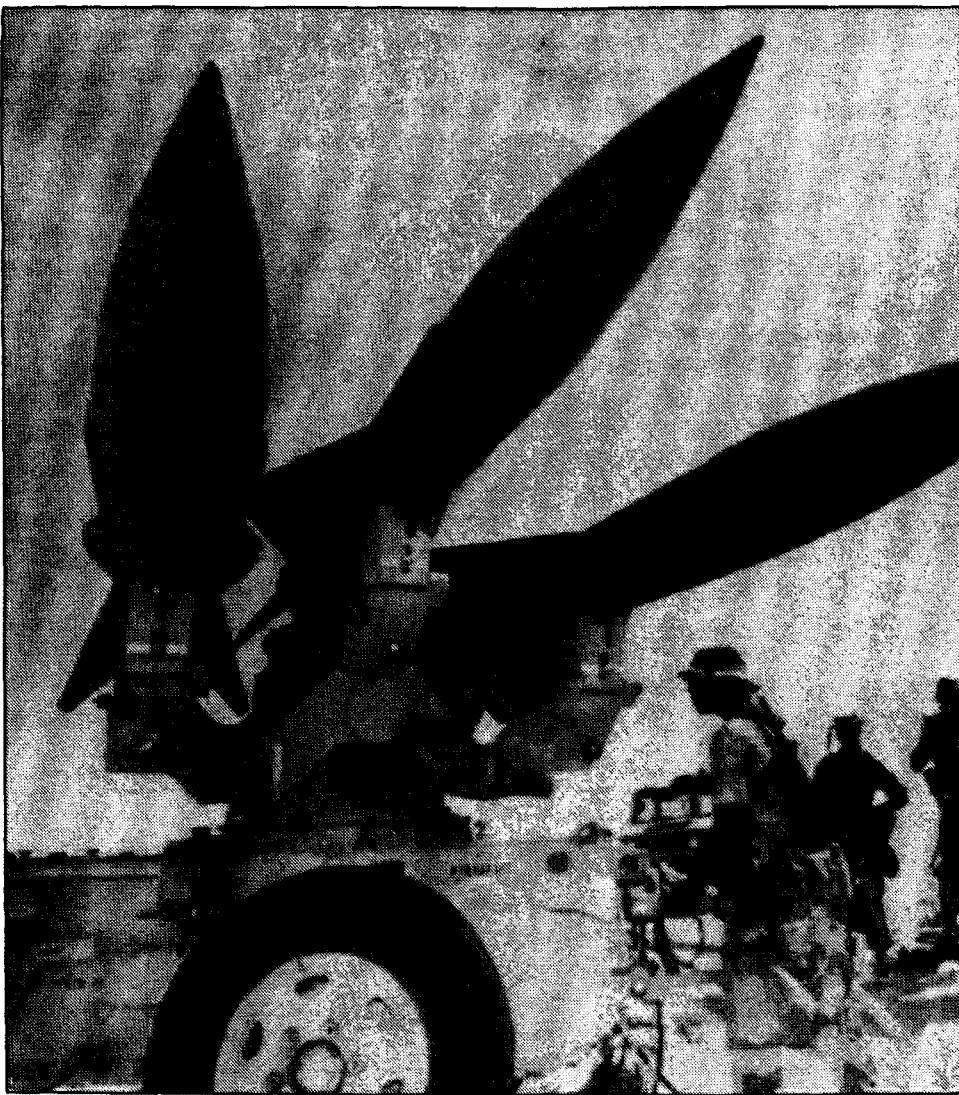
But the August coup against Gorbachov threatened to quash those new initiatives and nearly derailed a decade's work on what will probably be the last two arms-control treaties resulting from the superpower rivalry: the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) on strategic missiles and the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty.

STARTing over: The START accords to cut U.S. and Soviet long-range nuclear missiles by 30 percent was finalized in July. It took nine years to reach an agreement, nine years in which the two parties increased their nuclear arsenals by the same amount that they will now reduce those stockpiles. For years, negotiators boasted that START would cut the arsenals by 50 percent.

But depending on how loopholes are exploited, the actual reduction could be only 30 percent, maybe as low as 10 percent. Nevertheless, START does represent the first negotiated reduction in the long-range nuclear arsenals of the U.S. and Soviet Union and the treaty does provide a massive amount of data on the weapons and specific techniques for verifying compliance with the accord.

The treaty covering Europe's former Cold War frontline—the CFE Treaty—is finally on the fast track to ratification. The treaty, which calls for substantial cuts in Soviet forces in Eastern Europe and the Western USSR while requiring smaller cuts in NATO units, was completed last year but went into deep freeze when the Soviets unilaterally exempted some army units from the agreement. But this spring—with Soviet forces already retreating from much of Eastern Europe—the USSR backed down. It looks likely that the accord soon will be before the superpower and European parliaments.

When the Warsaw Pact voted itself out of existence on July 1, Europe became a half-bloc continent. If Washington tries to press for overwhelming superiority in Europe—perhaps by linking Soviet aid to NATO aims—the foundation of the new Europe may well be cracked. Whether NATO—with its built-in U.S. dominance—will expand across the continent or if some new, more equitable alliance



A chaotic world produces optimism in arms control

grows up in its place will be the center of the security debate in Europe for years to come.

The likeliest successor to NATO is the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which has moved away from its Cold War role as a talk shop and begun looking for practical work suited to its consensus-oriented mandate. In June, the 35 nations of the CSCE established the Conflict Prevention Center, a mediating body for disputes within and among member states. It was established just in time for Yugoslavia's civil war. A CSCE meeting in Prague in early August tried to negotiate a cease-fire and hammer out terms for reconciliation. While its effort has been less than a resounding success, nothing else in Yugoslavia has proven more effective.

While the break-up of the Eastern bloc and the rising tensions in the Balkans leave many pessimistic about arms control, there are many reasons for optimism. The governments of both Russia and Kazakhstan have come out against the testing of nuclear weapons. Since the USSR's only two test sites are in these republics, that could mean a de facto end to Soviet nuclear tests. That would put pressure on the U.S. to finally end its stringent opposition to a test ban.

Boris Yeltsin's call for Soviet nuclear weapons to be transferred to Russian territory would—theoretically—insulate these weapons from unrest elsewhere in the USSR. Although Kazakhstan has talked of retaining its nuclear weapons, other republics and former republics seem eager to be rid of them. In June, Lithuania's parliament voted to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the 1968 accord designed to control the spread of nuclear weapons and encour-

age nuclear disarmament. And as early as last year, the Ukraine said it intended to join the CSCE and to declare itself a nuclear-weapons-free zone.

With the reduction in Soviet military sites, there is a potent new argument for cutting the number of U.S. weapons aimed at the Soviet Union. Western Europe's two nuclear powers also have some strategic rethinking to do: as the Soviet Union shrinks, many British and French nuclear missiles will not

Current U.S. arms control policy makes the world safe for the projection of U.S. military power.

even reach key military and political sites in the country.

The urge to sign: An arms-control initiative launched by France in early June showed that it may already have begun this process of rethinking. When the Mitterrand government unveiled France's "arms control and disarmament plan" on June 3, it also announced its intention to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Long a vocal opponent of the NPT, France agreeing to this treaty is the diplomatic equivalent of a snowball making it through hell.

The French arms-control plan restated France's call for the elimination of chemical and biological weapons—and proposed goals for regional arms control, advocating greater openness and confidence-building

among neighboring countries. Although the French plan was encouraging, Paris remained silent on the question of a nuclear test ban. In fact, the French announcement came during the middle of six French nuclear tests in the South Pacific. This juxtaposition graphically illustrated the shortcomings of disarmament strategies based on non-proliferation.

Non-proliferation—the restriction, but not elimination, of certain types of weapons—has become a popular word in the arms-control vocabulary since the Gulf War. In the past, non-proliferation strategies have produced positive results. But by focusing too narrowly on certain aspects of the arms race, they have allowed other dimensions to continue or even accelerate.

A few weeks after the French announcement on the NPT, South Africa said it too would sign the treaty. Although South Africa has an advanced nuclear program, it is unclear whether Pretoria actually possesses nuclear weapons. Assuming Pretoria would allow inspections of its most sensitive sites, international inspections of South African nuclear sites should solve the mystery. But the mystery that remains is why South Africa changed its mind. President F.W. de Klerk said, "The threat of conventional military conflict in the southern Africa region involving superpower rivalry has diminished substantially." But since the primary threat to southern Africa's regional security was and continues to be South Africa, this is hardly a plausible reason. Only after de Klerk's announcement did the frontline states of Tanzania and Zambia agree to sign the NPT.

The NPT received a further boost in August when China, the last of the nuclear weapons states to reject the treaty, said it too planned to sign the accord. Before that, the Tiananmen Square massacre—along with charges that China had sold ballistic missiles to Syria and Pakistan and provided nuclear technology to Pakistan and Algeria—had seriously eroded China's diplomatic standing. Beijing clearly needed a dramatic gesture to restore its international credibility. If China does ratify the treaty, then all declared nuclear weapons states will have signed the NPT.

However, some important probable and near-nuclear states—Israel, India and Pakistan—remain outside the treaty. Nonetheless, the enhanced stature of the NPT will give disarmament advocates a stronger case in arguing that in order to preserve the treaty the nuclear powers must negotiate even deeper cuts in their own arsenals and halt nuclear testing.

Defying convention: Another kind of proliferation has also gained more attention since the Gulf War: the spread of conventional arms. Finding methods to restrict the arms trade as part of overall settlements in regional trouble spots has gained prominence since the end of the Gulf War. The vision of Iraq using Western (and Soviet) weapons paid for with Western credits against Western troops undoubtedly focused attention on the issue. The five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council—the U.S., Soviet Union, China, Britain and France, who are also the world's top five arms exporters—met in Paris in July and pledged to observe "rules of restraint" in selling arms to the Middle East. The ultimate aim was to create a zone free of weapons of mass de-

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By Joel Bleifuss

Who knows Bo?

A lot of people, frustrated with the current state of national politics, think it's time for a change. While centrist Democrats and Republicans may have different names, it is becoming increasingly clear that neither party is addressing the concerns of the majority of Americans. Isn't it about time for a candidate who is different; someone who represents the beleaguered working and middle classes; who takes a stand against the abusive power of multinational corporations; who puts America's, not the CIA's, interest first; a candidate who speaks to our hopes as well as our fears?

Then, how does "Bo Gritz for president" sound? Gritz—rhymes with "fights"—wants to set this country right. And he just might have the credentials to do that. A former lieutenant colonel and one of the most decorated Green Berets of the Vietnam War, Gritz is now standing up to the government he once served.

Gritz has the benefit of being a ready-made hero. He is the real-life character on which Rambo was based. In 1982 the Vietnamese captured him as he tried to find imprisoned POWs. These days, in addition to publicizing the plight of the POWs, Gritz wants the world to hear "the truth about the shadow government and the new world order."

He also plans to expose "government drug involvement." Gritz says he first learned that segments of the U.S. government were in the drug business from Khun Sa, an opium warlord in Burma. Khun Sa told him that his "best customers" included U.S. intelligence officials Richard Armitage, Theodore Shackley and Thomas Clines. Gritz heard, and now he spreads the word.

Bo Gritz sounds too good to be true. And he is. In the last few years Gritz has attracted a following on the left—a following that would surely abandon him if they knew the rest of the story.

These days Gritz is running for president on the Populist Party ticket. This isn't his first try at elected office. In 1988 he served as the Populist Party's original vice-presidential candidate—running mate of former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke.

Fascist fan dance: Gritz is closely associated with the Liberty Lobby, the largest anti-Semitic organization in the country. In September 1990, at the group's 35th anniversary celebration, Gritz spoke on a panel titled "Who is the Enemy?" The Liberty Lobby's weekly organ, *Spotlight*, hailed Gritz' speech with this headline: "Gritz warns ... Get ready to fight or lose freedom: links drugs, CIA, Mossad; slams U.S. foreign policy; alerts patriots to martial law threat."

Gritz mixes his politics with religion. In November 1990, he spoke on the subject "MIA/POW & Government Drug Dealers" at the Third Christian Heritage National Conference in Florida. The conference promotes the concept of Christian Identity, a white supremacist pseudo-theology that views Jews as Satan's servants.

If this sounds like standard right-wing ranting, that's because it is. But there is one difference. Chip Berlet of the Boston-based Political Research Associates, a think tank that monitors the right, says that while most of Gritz' networking has taken place on quasi-Nazi fringe, the lieutenant colonel is now gaining a wider following. According to Berlet, Gritz last year advised a gathering of Populist Party faithful in Palo Alto, Calif., that they should reach out and recruit people from the left.

Common cause? In July 1990 Gritz' educational organization, the Center for Action, located in Sandy Valley, Nev., sponsored a three-day conference titled "Freedom Call '90."

Speakers at Gritz' symposium included names familiar to many *In These Times* readers: Father Bill Davis, the co-founder of the Christic Institute, John Stockwell, the highest-ranking officer ever to defect from the CIA, and Barbara Honneger, the author of the book, *October Surprise*, and a one-time *In These Times* contributor.

Less-familiar conference speakers included Robert Streckter who, like many on the far right, maintains that a man-made AIDS virus was intentionally spread via infected vaccines to select populations. Also present was Steve Hemphling, of the Free Enterprise Society, a network of populist right-wing tax protesters that has been closely identified with the Christian Identity movement. And then there was Eustace Mullins, who in his 1986 work, *The Biological Jew*, wrote, "Throughout history, we find the Jew entwined about the reproductive organs of the gentile host like a parasitic vine which is slowly strangling a healthy tree."

There is common ground between the left and the right on a few issues. Says Berlet, "The far rightists who adhere to the Gritz

**Heather Booth: no Dem fatale**

By Steve Lilienthal

A plaque hanging on the wall in Heather Booth's office at the Coalition for Democratic Values (CDV) reads:

For it is the dreamers
Who bring the good fight
Who look to the future
Far beyond human sight
Who still find the courage
to stand all alone.

Though never one to shrink from a tough battle, Booth has plenty of friends and allies willing to stand by her side as she works to build a Demo-

cratic Party that will speak with a more progressive voice.

"I basically believe that change comes from below," she says, "but there needs to be leadership that stands up and fights for people. When Michael Dukakis was attacked [by George Bush in the 1988 presidential election] as a 'liberal,' he just retreated into saying, 'There you go, using the 'L' word.' I feel the Democrats certainly could have won that election had they had a leader who would fight for working people and this country," says the 45-year-old organizer who has spent three decades on the streets and in committee.

The CDV was formed with the hope that it could help nudge the Democratic Party to again embrace

the liberal populism once expounded by Democratic presidents such as Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson but downplayed during the Reagan era. "Democrats: Take Off the Guccis," implored the headline of a *Dallas Morning News* article announcing the organization's formation.

"I felt there had to be some way to give backbone to the national Democratic leadership," explains Booth.

Raised in Brooklyn, Booth was the daughter of a physician and a housewife who went back to school for a master's degree. Now 45, she recalls the household councils where family decisions were made.

"We practiced democracy in our family," she says. "I really believed from my home life that there is right and wrong." She credits her family's strong values for teaching her that "in the face of injustice, you work for justice."

In high school, Booth handed out pamphlets urging consumers to boycott Woolworth's because of the store's segregationist practices in the South. At the University of Chicago, she helped insurgents fight the Daley machine and worked with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee to register black voters in the South and to organize Chicago hospital workers.

Booth earned a master's degree in educational psychology. Then, while working as an editor at a research center, Booth's criticism of the treatment of a clerical co-worker resulted in her own firing. But Booth won a lawsuit and obtained back pay. In 1973 she used that money to start the Midwest Academy, an educational institute that trains grassroots organizers.

"It was a time when movements were falling apart. The Academy was founded to help develop a new network of people concerned about social change," she explains. As the Academy grew, training organizers across the nation, Booth, who remained its president, also founded the Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition that sought affordable energy prices. For seven years, she was a co-director and then president of Citizen Action, a 2,500,000-member organization that informs voters about the records of such progressive candidates as Senators Paul Simon (D-IL) and Tom Harkin (D-IA), as well as the records of their conservative opponents.

Simon considers Booth a "superb organizer" and credits Citizen Action with helping produce his narrow victory over the incumbent Republican U.S. Sen. Charles Percy in 1984. While Simon's election proved that a progressive message wins at the polls, top Democratic strategists failed to heed that lesson.

Duked out: Booth mentions the frustration she felt in 1988 watching Dukakis flounder by refusing to defend his liberalism. At the same time, Sen. Howard Metzenbaum (D-OH) fended off a strong challenge from Cleveland's then-Mayor George Voinovich. As Dukakis wavered, Metzenbaum identified himself with issues such as plant-closing notification and opposition to the sale of cop-killer bullets. Metzenbaum ended up winning Ohio by a higher percentage than Bush.

"I felt there had to be a way to give backbone to the national leadership," says Booth, who midway through the 1988 campaign called a top-ranking Democratic strategist suggesting the creation of an organization like CDV. Metzenbaum was thinking along similar lines and later gave speeches across the country to test his idea. Booth and Metzenbaum were introduced to each other by television producer Norman Lear, and last fall CDV was born. CDV's founding statement reads, "Social justice and compassion for those in need are truly American values that will be championed, without apology, by the Democratic Party." The organization's first meeting was held in January.

The organization has signed up 800 members, including such notable legislators as Senators Paul Wellstone (D-MN), Chris Dodd (D-CT) and Tom Harkin (D-IA). Former Texas Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower, Madison, Wis., Mayor Paul Soglin, New York City Commissioner of Consumer Affairs Mark Green and former Missouri Lt. Gov. Harriet Woods are among the Democrats outside the Beltway who have felt the need for an organization like CDV.

Linking up: "Our hope is to link the leadership with the grass-roots," Booth says. And in a slap at the Democratic Leadership Council, which had received backing for its May convention from such corporations as Philip Morris and Coca-Cola, she continues, "And when we say 'grass-roots,' we mean people who work for a living, pay taxes, fight this country's wars and who deserve a better break."

Connecticut state Rep. Miles Rapoport argues, "The hidden underside of the Reagan-Bush years has been a growing maturity of the Democratic Party's progressive wing. CDV could be an agent to catalyze that local strength nationally."

Rapoport, the head of an organization of progressive elected officials in New England, describes Booth as "a real visionary whose history has been to see opportunities to develop coalitions that make an impact."

According to Booth, the problem is some Democrats have been so intimidated by the Reagan and Bush victories that they now try to imitate the GOP by catering to the whims of business. In return, they get corporate campaign contributions.

"Even well-intentioned political leaders focus more and more effort on fundraising and lose track of the real constituency," says Booth. "When you start seeking campaign contributions from business, you lose the ability to fight for people in the first place." She contends that public financing of campaigns, along with limits on overall expenditures and on TV advertising, will help encourage citizen participation in politics.

Booth has been busy arranging forums to publicize CDV's agenda. Already, events have been held in Des Moines, Iowa, and Los Angeles. A forum addressing health care, education and jobs will be held in Atlanta on November 9. These forums, she explains, are intended to "influence the terms of the presidential debate and promote the issues the candidates should speak to."

Wife, mother and activist: When not enveloped in organizing, Booth spends time watching classic movies and going for long walks with husband Paul, director of organizing and field services for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. She is the mother of two sons, Dan, a former *In These Times* intern who just graduated from Hampshire College, and Gene, a former lead guitar player in the rock group Mantis. She is also active in a women's book club.

But the demands of the cause are never far away—particularly as the election year approaches. A direct-mail campaign to increase CDV's membership is in the works. And former Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall will head a policy-planning council while former CIA Director William Colby will chair a similar group on national security.

Sitting in her office, Booth recalls that many on the left were skeptical about CDV's formation. But, she says, the mood of the nation and the party is changing. "Most of the names mentioned as presidential candidates at the start of the year were from the most timid and conservative end of the party. Now, we have candidates who are ready to show which side they are on," she says.

She pauses and then adds, "There's a real opening for progressive politics. We have to help the Democrats walk through that opening."

Steve Lilienthal is a Washington, D.C.-based writer.

thesis agree with the left analysis that the CIA tolerates or encourages drug smuggling by its operatives and allies. But the rightists often overlay these theories with complex and undocumented conspiracy theories. Some of the extreme right say U.S. foreign policy is actually controlled by Mossad, Jewish financial interests, or secret networks of international bankers. The Israeli connection to Iran-contra was at least one reason the Gritz crowd condemned Oliver North's operation—another point of alliance with the left."

Secret teams: Berlet is especially critical of the Christic Institute's ongoing association with Gritz.

To such critics, the Christic's Davis responds, "Some people say we are being swallowed up by the right, but I want to assure them that we aren't so easy to swallow. I don't want to get into this internecine factionalism on the left where we end up pissing on each other's leg. There are more important struggles to engage in."

Davis explains his presence at "Freedom Call '90" this way: "I gave a keynote address at one of Gritz' conferences and I've taken some flack for it. My own view is he is a deadly honest person but he gets carried away with his past history. His association with the extreme right wing I find very unsavory."

"But I find him credible in certain areas. There are some areas where we agree and there are some areas where we agree to disagree. Gritz began to see from his own experience in Southeast Asia that we were bringing up the same names he was bringing up. We became allies but held each other at arm's length."

Says Berlet, "This is like some leftist in Germany saying, 'Okay, we work with Hitler but we keep him at arm's length.'"

A former Christic employee had this to say on the controversy: "We should have had a process where information from a source like Gritz—whether it is rock solid or whether it is hallucinatory—should be listened to and evaluated. But any kind of public association that appears to endorse or apologize for a group like Gritz is a serious mistake."

So far the Christics have not disassociated themselves from Gritz. On September 7, Gritz appeared at a new-age bookstore in Los Angeles. The Christic Institute was also there with an informational table as were pickets from the group Persons Against Racist Terror.

Another wolf? Commentator Craig Hulet of Seattle has made quite a name for himself in the past year as a savvy commentator on the Gulf War.

Pacifica radio stations KPFA in San Francisco and KPFA in Los Angeles have broadcast Hulet's war analysis. In fact when a Hulet tape was offered as a premium at KPFA, it was a best-seller, bringing in a rumored \$30,000 in pledges.

What is Hulet saying? He maintains that the U.S. went to war in the Gulf under orders from the Al Sabah family of Kuwait, in concert with ruling financial elites. According to Hulet, the Al Sabahs could call the shots because, according to his figures, the family has invested more than \$300 billion in the United States. Hulet says that the Al Sabahs had threatened to withdraw their money—and thus destroy the U.S. economy—if Bush did not kick Saddam out of Kuwait.

According to Berlet, "Hulet's analysis has many of the hallmarks of other oversimplified conspiracy theories that reduce complex issues to simple equations. And it seems to scapegoat one family of Arabs, albeit one with powerful financial holdings, in a way that would be equally unacceptable if their name was Rothschild rather than Al Sabah."

Sarah Diamond, a columnist in the *Guardian* and *Z*, and her longtime colleague, Richard Hatch, have prepared a 13-page research document on this "obscure right-wing conspiracy theorist [who has become] a West Coast celebrity." Diamond and Hatch track Hulet's connections to both the John Birch Society and the Liberty Lobby and come to the conclusion that Hulet "is engaged in a far-right political recruitment project." They end their study with words of caution: "Progressive media outlets have an ethical obligation to protect their audiences from exploitation by people like Hulet. This is true even if large numbers of ill-informed people are willing to purchase their tapes or other products."

In his defense, Hulet would probably say he is merely trying to bring people together. When asked about third parties, he told one radio interviewer, "The problem with those third parties is that they are such a tiny, tiny minority of the intelligentsia... They are fighting among themselves. They still see it as a left-wing/right-wing dialectic that they must oppose. And all I'm trying to make very clear to the American people including the ones that read all the right books is that the enemy is our government. The enemy is not part of our society. It has always historically been them versus us."

Degenerate art in America

When U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms launched his most recent attack on "filthy" art, he couldn't have sounded more like a member of the Third Reich if Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels wrote his speech. Saying he is tired of "degenerate so-called art that the [National Endowment for the Arts] has, in fact, supported with public funds," the North Carolina Republican pushed through a proposal to ban federal grants to "promote, disseminate or produce materials that depict or describe, in a patently offensive way, sexual or excretory activities or organs." Is it possible that the Senate's most vocal art critic slept through Art History 101 and never heard of the Nazis' infamous "Entartete Kunst," or Degenerate Art, exhibition? After purging 32 public art collections in Germany, the Nazis organized "Entartete Kunst" to show Germans the "decadent" and "morally offensive" works that were purchased with "the taxpayers' money." The show drew some 3 million visitors on its 13-city tour between 1937 and 1941. A re-creation of the original exhibition—which featured such influential artists as Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Max Beckmann and Marc Chagall, among many others—has been making its way across the U.S. since February. The show, titled, "Degenerate Art: the Fate of the Avant Garde in Nazi Germany," was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and has passed through both Los Angeles and Chicago with much fanfare. It opens at the Smithsonian Institution on October 16. Helms might find a trip to the Smithsonian helpful, if only to see the historical company he keeps. But then again, maybe he'll pick up a few ideas—the exhibit also shows films of Nazi book burnings. During the Nazis' cultural purges, German expressionist painter Max Beckmann said, "The greatest danger that threatens mankind is collectivism. Everywhere attempts are being made to lower happiness and the way of living of mankind to the level of termites." That threat is so palpable in the U.S. today, we can almost taste the wood.

Good news

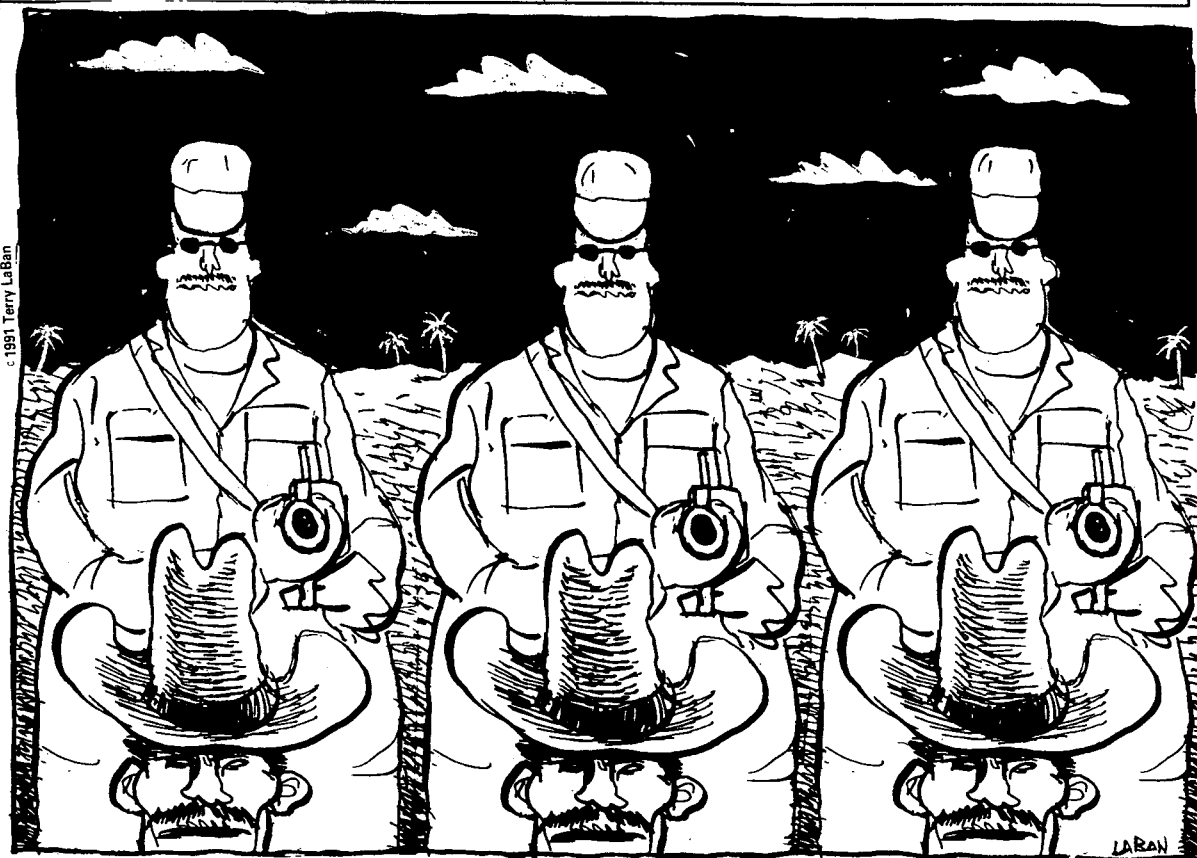
Republican Gov. William Weld of Massachusetts is urging his California counterpart to sign that state's gay rights bill. In a letter to Republican Gov. Pete Wilson, Weld noted the "positive effects a similar law has had in Massachusetts." Weld said, "An important message has been sent that discrimination against gays—or any group of people—is quite simply wrong, and will not be tolerated." It is the second time Weld has lobbied a governor on behalf of gay rights legislation. In April he urged Republican Gov. John McKernan to sign a gay rights package in Maine. McKernan, unfortunately, declined.

Dog gone

If the dog truly is man's best friend, then it looks like some humans have betrayed that trust. A recent study shows that dog owners who spray their lawns with certain weed killers double their dog's chance of contracting cancer. The study, published last month in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, found that dogs playing on lawns treated with 2,4-D contract malignant lymphomas, non-Hodgkin's lymphomas and other cancers at twice the rate of unexposed dogs. While the news about America's canines is alarming, it only confirms similar studies conducted on North America's bipedal population. The Sept. 11 issue of *Rachel's Hazardous Waste News* notes that the cancers the dogs contracted are similar to those observed in farmers from Nebraska, Kansas and Saskatchewan who spread 2,4-D on their crops. Approximately 600 million pounds of 2,4-D are used each year by American farmers and homeowners. Many environmentalists suspect dioxin, a highly toxic compound contained in 2,4-D, is largely responsible for the increased cancer rates (See *In These Times*, Aug. 7, Sept. 25). Herbicide industry officials have rejected such studies, however, pointing to surveys of their own employees that show no increased incidence of cancer. But a recent study by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health found a 46 percent rise in cancer among workers manufacturing 2,4-D. Commercial weed killers containing 2,4-D include Weedone, Weed-B-Gon, Red Devil Dry Weed Killer, Scott's 4-XD, Weed-Rhap, Weedar and Green Cross Weed No More 80.

Please send timely news about local activities, follow-ups on stories we've run or other interesting bits of information—including your address and phone number—to Glenora Croucher, *In These Times*, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.

INSHORT



A recurrent nightmare for Salvadoran refugees

Nine-month-old Maria Norelby Hernandez bled to death from the .50mm machine-gun bullet that cut through her legs. Her sister Angelina, 12, and a neighbor, Paula Serano, 81, were also wounded in the legs.

The three victims were not caught in cross fire.

At 7:30 a.m., September 2, from Las Bolas Heights overlooking the town of San Jose las Flores, Bracamonte Battalion troops trained their tripod-mounted guns down on the community and squeezed the triggers. A Salvadoran refugee support group, CRIPDES, says 10 civilians were wounded.

The town, located in the conflictive northern province of Chalatenango, is populated by 1,100 former refugees—mostly women, children and the elderly. It is a repatriated community, like nearly 100 others in rural El Salvador.

The "repopulators," as the ex-refugees are known, returned to their ancestral lands four years ago from the Honduran refugee camps to which they fled in the early '80s. Being home to farm again has given them a measure of dignity and control over their lives not possible in the Honduran camps. But the army considers them to be rebel supporters and, therefore, fair game.

The former refugees complain of frequent army harassment and even unprovoked attacks such as the one on September 2. Since mid-August, the onslaught seems to have sharpened in frequency and degree.

With few exceptions, the repopulated towns are located in rural areas controlled by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN).

The military views the communities as rebel havens and supply stations. Indeed, guerrillas are regularly seen in the towns. But the army denies targeting the villages, arguing that so-called "civilian" casualties are really guerrillas or the unfortunate victims of cross fire accidents because of the nearness of rebel positions.

But in recent weeks, evidence to the contrary has been piling up. On August 30, two U.S. journalists were wounded by an exploding mortar as they covered an artillery attack in the area of San Jose las Flores. Thomas Long of the *Miami Herald* and Dan Alder of United Press International suffered shrapnel injuries. Another reporter, Pacifica Radio's Beth Stickney, was unhurt. Peasants claimed the barrage was directed at the town itself. The reporters said the two-hour bombardment seemed excessive for the size and proximity of rebel positions.

Fourteen other repopulated communities in five provinces report similar army assaults.

Residents of Segundo Montes City, in Morazan province in the east, say they suffered a sustained and deliberate attack on their town that began August 17. The independent Salvadoran Human Rights Commission confirmed that nine townspeople were wounded and a dozen homes damaged by shrapnel and bullets. Twelve acres of crops and a \$6,000 grain storage facility were destroyed. The commission also said an 18-year-old woman miscarried after being beaten by troops. Additionally, town leaders reported that 23 persons were overcome by tear gas, an odd weapon for soldiers to use during a battle with guerrillas.

The army confirmed it launched a full-scale operation in Morazan employing four elite battalions in the long-time guerrilla stronghold. But, in addition to the insurgents the

army claims to be hunting, an estimated 35,000 civilians inhabit the 57 communities in the area.

The psychological effects of the army operations are dramatic. It took the horror of massacres and army "hammer and anvil" operations in the early '80s to drive these rural families from the lands they inhabited for centuries and rarely ventured beyond. Now, they feel a terrifying déjà vu.

The attacks have already caused a mass exodus of peasants from Chalatenango, according to San Salvador's Auxiliary Catholic Bishop Gregorio Rosa Chavez. And they will probably inspire peasants in other areas to flee as well.

But that is likely the outcome the army seeks—hoping to weaken the guerrillas' influence in these rural communities and thus debilitate them at the peace table.

But peace-table advantage may not be the army's only objective. Some Salvadoran officials still believe a military victory over the guerrillas is possible. They theorize that it is only a matter of time before the rebels weaken and break, now that their Sandinista allies no longer run Nicaragua.

Hopes of a rebel defeat may explain why the army would so conspicuously attack civilian communities just as the United Nations' verification mission, ONUSAL, begins its work documenting human rights abuses. The U.N.'s Chalatenango mission opened only four days before the attack on San Jose las Flores.

But fresh army atrocities would seem to undermine the armed forces at the peace table, where rebels argue that the military must be purged, reduced or even disbanded because of its incorrigible abusiveness of civilians and power. Unless, of course, the army views peace negotiations as just a way to buy time.

—Marcella Tardy

By David Moberg

BENEATH THE LEGAL AND FINANCIAL ARCANUM, George Bush's prescription for the ailing U.S. banking system is simple: make the banks bigger and let 'em loose.

It's bad medicine for a misdiagnosed problem.

Last February the Treasury Department proposed a major reform of the banking system. The plan would create nationwide

ECONOMICS

branch banking and permit non-financial institutions—such as Sears or General Motors—to own banks. It would also allow strong banks to expand into selling and underwriting stocks, insurance and other new financial services. While providing new borrowing authority for the nearly insolvent Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) to cope with the continuing flood of bank failures, the plan also restricted government insurance of deposits and consolidated bank supervision, now fragmented among several federal agencies. It retained current controversial policies that treat some banks as “too big to fail” and permit banks to hide bad debts with dubious accounting.

Last summer, the House and Senate banking committees—filled with grateful recipients of bank political largesse—approved the main thrust of Bush's initiative (more tempered in the Senate committee version). But the House Energy and Commerce Committee has added so many conditions that Bush and the banks may decide to abandon the legislation this year, except to get enough bailout money for the FDIC to continue operating.

Yet to some extent, regulatory laxness, federal court decisions, and market forces—encouraged in many cases by the federal bailouts and sales of failed banks and thrifts—are already creating what Bush and the big banks want. Many large banks are merging—like Chemical Bank and Manufacturers Hanover Trust in New York and Bank of America and Security Pacific on the west coast. New, giant super-regional banks—like Banc One in Columbus, Ohio, or NCNB in Charlotte, N.C., (which in turn is merging with C&S/Sovran to form the fourth largest U.S. bank)—are gobbling up dozens of smaller banks. By past antitrust standards, the Charlotte-based Southern Finance Project concluded, these three latest big mergers would be banned.

At the same time, banks and their holding companies are either breaking down or running around barriers to nationwide operation and have found the Reagan-Bush administrations and the courts more than willing to let them expand into dozens of previously forbidden ventures. Banking reform, as proposed by Bush, would ratify, rationalize and accelerate these trends.

New economic realities: Historically banks have played two critical economic roles. They act as the intermediaries between savers and borrowers—and in the process actually create money, with the Federal Reserve Bank adjusting the reins to cool down or heat up the economy. They also provide the fundamental mechanisms for carrying on most business transactions. Thus the soundness of the banks and the probity of bankers' judgments are foundations of the whole



Bush bank prescription is actually bad medicine

economic system.

In the United States, deep populist distrust of the big banks' power and machinations has kept the banking system more decentralized than in most countries. On top of that, New Deal reforms regulated banks to protect depositors, minimize speculative excess, focus the social mission of financial institutions and provide federal supervision of the industry. Both democratic populism and New Deal liberalism are now under attack.

The system began to crumble as the post-World War II international financial system established at Bretton Woods fell apart in the early '70s, followed by two decades of instability and high inflation. Increasingly, both savers and big borrowers were making end runs around banks as an era of financial innovation took hold: savers turned to money market funds, while corporations sold their debt—“commercial paper”—on the open market, rather than borrowing from banks. Increasingly debts of all kinds were “securitized”—turned into instruments (such as mortgage-backed bonds) that are easily traded rather than held by one bank.

As savers and borrowers found new avenues on which to connect with each other, banks lost their share of the financial market. Consequently, banks often turned to newer and riskier lending. The Federal Reserve lost its grip on regulation of the money supply. And regulators found themselves years behind the curve following the consequences of junk bonds and other novelties.

Now some observers claim banks are becoming anachronisms. But veteran Wall Street analyst Henry Kaufman cautions that this entire new financial superstructure still relies on the banks playing their basic role as financial intermediaries.

It ain't the meat: The big banks think they can thrive if they become bigger in size and scope of what they do. Yet what's needed is not for banks to get bigger but to get better. And to get better there must be not Bush-style deregulation but a new, more comprehensive regulation covering all bank-like activity, whoever performs it.

In 1970, six of the ten largest banks in the

world were U.S.; now they're all Japanese. The dominance of big banks in Europe and Japan, which have the power to invest in (even control) corporations as well as lend money, is taken as a *prima facie* case that America needs bigger banks.

But this may be just financial penis envy. Most academic analyses conclude that beyond a relatively modest size—well below that of the bigger U.S. banks—there are few economies of scale. When banks get very big, efficiency may actually decline. Even a Chicago Federal Reserve Bank study that claims bigger banks are more efficient concludes that the greatest opportunities for efficiency come from simply better management.

Also, it's not just small banks that are troubled now. Most future bailout costs will come from 95 large banks that Congress' investigative wing, the General Accounting Office (GAO), expects to fail in the next few years.

Even without nationwide branch banking, banks are not tied down to loans to, or deposits from, one part of the country. For example Chicago's Continental Bank got in trouble with oil-patch loans and foreign depositors. Furthermore, a study by the Southern Finance Project showed that the geographically less-

There must be a new, more comprehensive regulation covering all banklike activity— whoever performs it—not just Bush-style deregulation.

diversified banks were likely to be more profitable, make fewer bad loans, have stronger capital cushions and charge lower fees. Giant banks become more bureaucratic and less sensitive to local conditions and the needs of individuals and small business.

The Bush move to bigness breaks down the separation between finance and commerce in two critical ways. First, corporations could own banks. Second, banks could invest in cor-

porations, as well as selling and underwriting stock offerings and insurance.

As many as one third of the nation's banks don't have enough capital. But few U.S. corporations have capital surpluses to invest in banks, and there's little reason for them to invest in such risky and unprofitable enterprises. Some large foreign corporations, however, might be able and interested.

Even if corporations could invest, such moves raise three of the central objections to all attempts to unite financial and commercial enterprises. First, it could lead to undesirable concentrations of economic and political power. Second, it could lead to abuses of the banking system for the sake of the commercial interests of the bank. Despite all the talk of building “fire walls” to separate the two sides of the new megabanking, everyone recognizes that in a crisis those fire walls would be breached. Also, the stronger the fire wall separation, the less opportunity for any “synergy” from megabanking that proponents claim and, therefore, little reason for the expansion.

Finally, the government insurance and safety nets designed for banks will inevitably be extended to the banks' commercial interests. For example, if First Giant Bank is threatened by the failure of International Megacorp, in which it has heavily invested, there will be pressure for the government to save Megacorp.

Japan and Germany may have thrived with big banks and a corporatist capitalism, but politically and culturally those banks see themselves as farsighted planners for strong national economies, working in conjunction with the government. That's alien to American politics. Even if a more democratized version of such cooperation might be desirable, that's not what's in the cards. Also, as Jane D'Arista, a banking economist at Boston University Law School, argued in an Economic Policy Institute report, any competitive disadvantages of big U.S. banks stem more from the weaknesses of the American economy than from their smaller size.

Why bankers shouldn't be speculators: Will banks that got into trouble by making speculative real estate loans, wild-eyed loans to Third World governments and forays into junk bonds really become more sound by plunging into insurance and the securities business—both nearly as shaky as banking?

Those who don't recall the abuses of banks dealing in the stock market during the '20s, need only look back at the '80s to get a small taste of problems to come. According to a September GAO report, the Bank of New England—now being bailed out at a cost of \$2.5 billion—failed in large part because of its aggressive real estate lending in which it acted more like an investor than a traditional bank, often lending to real estate developers sitting on its board of directors. Although regulators knew problems were developing in 1985, they took no action until 1989, when it was too late.

The United States needs comprehensive re-regulation of the entire financial services industry, providing a secure niche for traditional banking and tighter, coherent supervision of the whole industry. The fundamental aim must be to restore the traditional functions of financial services—aiding the growth of the real economy. Under certain conditions bigger banks could have an important role, but the current rush to deregulated bigness is simply a recipe for a compounded crisis a few years down the road.

By Julia Gilden
SAN FRANCISCO

A QUICKLY-MOUNTED BATTLE TO RID California's free newspapers of a new budget-balancing tax has unexpectedly resulted in the first statewide trade association of suburban, community and alternative newspapers.

But while the free papers managed to avoid what some have termed Republican Gov. Pete Wilson's \$13 billion "budget sausage," members of the newly formed California Free

MEDIA

Press Association (CFPA) say the tax fight uncovered a more critical struggle with large dailies trying to put the smaller papers out of business.

Luxury tax: When the tax went into effect July 15, the large papers were able to pass the cost on to their customers. In fact, CFPA President Dan Pulcrano, editor of the *San Jose Metro*, claims the large papers are turning a profit from the new tax by significantly raising the newsstand price well above the new tax. But smaller, free newspapers had no way to charge a sales tax, so a new tax was added to their printing bills, with the immediate effect of nearly driving some tightly-budgeted small publications out of business, according to Pulcrano.

Pulcrano alleges that the long-established California Newspaper Publishers Association had instructions from the larger papers not to fight for an exemption for the smaller papers. So the smaller papers broke off, formed their own lobby and rammed a bill to exempt free papers from the tax through the legislature in four weeks. Since free papers had

California's free papers escape a taxing issue

never before been taxed, no one could calculate how much the new taxes would have added to the budget. Because of this, they had not been included as a line item, making it easier for legislators and the governor to remove them from the tax.

Meanwhile, the state's seven major dailies also formed their own independent lobby, the Golden State Newspaper Association, hiring one of the state's most influential lobbyists to develop a separate bill to rescind the tax, aimed at the larger papers from the beginning, according to Pulcrano. But their

While alternative papers are thriving, the number of people reading dailies has remained steady.

bill was introduced too late to be passed.

Other non-profit publications that were not exempted, such as the San Francisco-based *Socialist Review*, which considers its quarterly publication to be educational material, are fighting the tax in a separate bill.

Calculating and collecting the tax from subscribers, many out-of-state, has been "an administrative nightmare and politically outrageous," says *Socialist Review* Executive Editor Leslie Kauffman, who added that the new tax undermines Wilson's pledge to address the state's educational crisis.

Turf war: Acknowledging that large papers are suffering from decreased circulation and

advertising, Pulcrano and other small newspaper publishers believe the giants are trying to put them out of business. At the same time, the major dailies are continuing to put each other out of business. In 1940 there were 279 cities with competing dailies. Today there are 19. This month the *San Francisco Chronicle-Examiner* joint operating agreement, the first in the country when it was initiated 10 years ago, was extended, ensuring no major press competition in the city in the foreseeable future. And Copley Newspapers in San Diego folded the afternoon *Tribune* into the mighty *Union*.

Fighting for readers has escalated into a giant turf war, as publications are increasingly specialized, Pulcrano says.

"If you want the best weather map, you read *USA Today*," he says. "If you want intellectual analysis, you read *In These Times*."

In the view of Ric Trent, CFPA chairman and publisher of Southern California Community Newspapers, the tide is turning in American journalism in favor of alternative and community newspapers. Trent notes that the number of people reading dailies has remained steady for the past few decades, while alternative and community papers are proliferating across the country.

In 1960 there were 60 million U.S. households that bought a total of 61.5 million newspapers each day, he says. Today the U.S. has 92 million households, but those households still read only 61.5 million daily papers. Meanwhile, community and alternative newspaper circulation has grown from 17.5 million in 1960 to 58 million today, making them major competitors for the larger

dailies. If circulation figures for all the major dailies combined were adjusted to exclude *USA Today*, "the biggest money-loser in the history of newspapers," Trent says the community-based and alternatives would surpass the majors.

"More people are reading newspapers today than at any other time in American history," Trent says, adding that "small, unpaid papers are growing at warp speed."

As daily readership has declined, alternative newspaper giveaway look-alikes have begun appearing in California's news boxes. The *Los Angeles Times* Calendar strongly resembles the *LA Weekly* and is clearly geared toward young readers in an attempt to bolster citywide circulation losses, Trent says. In San Jose, Pulcrano has filed suit against the *San Jose Mercury-News* for its recent weekend clone of the *Metro*, called "Eye," the same name as the *Metro*'s most popular column.

With virtually no outreach effort, 42 publishers have already joined the fledgling CFPA, including California Hispanic Publishers Association, San Francisco Neighborhood Newspaper Association, Association of Alternative Newspapers and common ownership community newspapers. The combined 100 weeklies and monthlies reach 4 million readers.

The CFPA's agenda includes fighting censorship and strengthening free papers in the marketplace with joint ad sales, says Michael Winter, associate publisher of the *San Francisco Weekly*.

Bruce Brugmann, publisher of the San Francisco *Bay Guardian* and longtime opponent of joint operating agreements, says the new association represents a major change that will reverberate across the country.

"Up until now, the lines have been drawn between chains and independents," he says. "But this fight showed that the dividing line from now on will be between paid and free newspapers." □

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Authors join autoworkers to make one bigger union

By Julia Gilden

A PRECEDENT-SETTING ALLIANCE WAS forged this month between the home-based members of a small freelance writers' union and one of the nation's largest labor organizations, the United Auto Workers (UAW).

In its just-completed first decade the Na-

LABOR

tional Writers Union (NWU) grew to 3,000 journalists, fiction authors and technical writers in 11 locals across the country. During the same period, a rise in imports and the relocation of U.S. factories overseas cost the UAW nearly 400,000 union jobs, bringing its current membership down to 1 million.

Affiliating the writers' union reflects a shift in UAW leadership to accommodate the national economic shift to service and technical industries, according to Eastern Regional Director Phil Wheeler. Although the NWU is the first entirely home-based union to affiliate with the UAW, other new categories of workers have been recently added to the UAW rolls, including 2,400 graduate-student

teaching assistants at the University of Massachusetts and 1,000 day-care workers in Boston.

For its part, the writers' union will benefit from the UAW's vast legal department, national and state legislative lobby and organizing resources. The affiliation will also give the NWU more leverage with major book and magazine publishers—an area in which the union has had little success—and will enable it to offer members better health insurance options. As NWU President Jonathan Tasini explained, "We'll get the freedom to build what we have proven is a strong union. Our growth has only been restricted by our ability to reach people."

Many writers learn about the union at local conferences on issues like author-editor contract negotiation skills and self-syndica-

The National Writers Union is the first home-based union to affiliate with the UAW.

tion. But the union's most effective recruiting tool has been its record of recovering nearly \$1 million in fees owed to writers by recalcitrant book, periodical and newspaper publishers. While the entire publishing industry relies heavily on freelancers, two common abuses of writers are reselling material without the author's permission or additional pay, and uneven methods of payment, if at all.

The NWU currently has contracts with only a handful of journals, including *In These Times*. The relationship between the impoverished newspaper and the union has not always been smooth. But union organizers note that a grievance on behalf of union members against *In These Times* for a substantial sum has resulted, at least, in a more sensitive method of apprising writers that payment for articles will be slow until the weekly improves its finances.

Wheeler said he was bombarded with phone calls from UAW members anxious to learn the outcome of the vote, which came as a resounding yes from writers whose writer-editor relationships are not described in any worker's manual. Even though freelance writers are not employees in the usual sense, they are entitled to the same hard-won rights as traditional unionists, said Wheeler at the national delegates' assembly last June.

Said Tasini, "They [the UAW] want to learn from us. We are in the forefront of organizing home-based writers." □

Julia Gilden is on the executive board of the National Writers Union.

One year ago, *In These Times* reported on an \$85 billion plan by Quebec to submerge a wilderness area the size of Maine as part of an unprecedented hydro-electric power project. At the time, government officials considered the environmental risks "manageable." But now, thanks largely to the work of the native Cree and Inuit peoples, as well as that of U.S. environmentalists, the project is on hold—probably for a year. The real battle, however, looms just ahead.

By Malcolm Howard

GREAT WHALE, NORTHERN QUEBEC

AN INUIT FAMILY PACKS A CANOE FOR A two-week hunting and whaling trip up the Hudson Bay coast. Overhead, a pontooned Air Wemindgi charter flies Cree hunters 150 miles inland to the headwaters of the Great Whale River. Business as usual in this town of row houses and teepees nestled on a sandspit where the Great

ENVIRONMENT

Whale meets the east side of Hudson Bay.

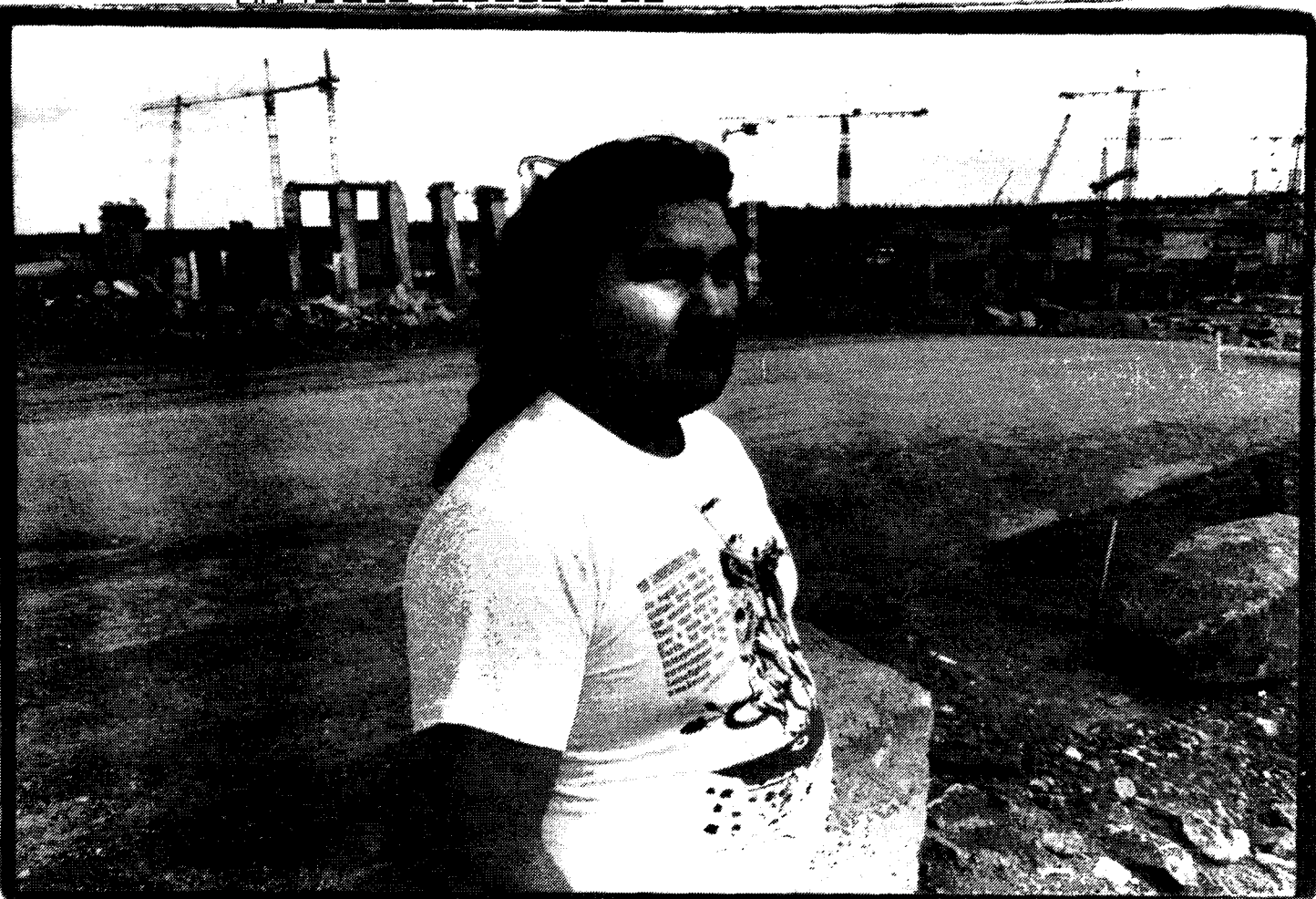
But the town's calm surface belies its role as a key battleground where North America's industrial and indigenous economies face off over resources. The spoils of war in this case are the waters of the Great Whale River.

A Quebec-owned energy monopoly called Hydro-Quebec plans three hydro-electric dams on the river to generate 3,060 megawatts for cities including Montreal, Boston and New York. The dams would create 20,000 jobs over 10 years, and ensuing export contracts would make up about 28 percent of the company's profits, says Hydro-Quebec. Just one deal with New York State could yield Hydro-Quebec \$11 billion over 20 years.

Wilderness be dammed: But because the \$13 billion project would submerge roughly 2,700 square miles of their sub-arctic backyard, the Cree and Inuit say they could no longer live off the *Eeyou Astchee*, as the Cree call their homeland. The Great Whale, they say, is their key economic asset: they spread fishnets, shoot geese and carry pails of drinking water from its sandy banks.

"Our economic base is being destroyed," says Noah Nomiamskum, a slight Cree elder who will lose nearly all his trapline (a row of traps set over a 20-mile territory) under proposed reservoirs. Like the 30 Cree families managing traplines around Great Whale, the Nomiamskums eat the otter, beaver, mink or muskrat they catch, then exchange the furs for supplies or cash. Nomiamskum knows his people could negotiate a cash settlement to compensate for damage caused by reservoirs, but he says he'd rather resist the European work-a-day world. "The white man's wage economy is very unstable," he says. "But what the land provides is always there."

Nomiamskum's livelihood was granted a stay of execution in late August when Quebec officials caved in to political pressure and postponed the Great Whale project pending environmental review. A few weeks later, a federal court in Canada erected another wall before Hydro-Quebec. Justice Paul Rouleau ruled September 12 that federal officials must approve the dams before work can begin. In his decision, Rouleau determined that approval must be based on a review process outlined in the Crees' and Inuits' 1975 treaty with Canada. The treaty gives the tribes seats on environmental review committees that, unlike other federal



Cree native Dale House stands in front of a Hydro-Quebec dam erected on the LaGrande River.

Tribes get temporary reprieve from Hydro-Quebec's dam foolishness

and provincial panels, can stop the dams on environmental grounds.

"This is a landmark decision for environmental protection and native rights in Canada," says Matthew Coon-Come, chief of the Grand Council of the Crees. But because the 1975 agreement fails to specify how the reviews should be done, Coon-Come issued a list of demands: \$12 million to fund public intervention in federal hearings, no time limit on the review, analyses of alternatives to hydro-power and disclosure of Hydro-Quebec's secret contracts with metal smelters along the St. Lawrence River.

Canadian environmentalists were also pleased with the ruling. They've long complained that federal and provincial studies

are conducted during or after construction and only require developers to correct some of the environmental damage. Case in point: the only complete study of what 1,500 square miles of water does to "the bush"—as the Cree and Inuits call the gentle valleys of black spruce and gooseberry bushes—came after Hydro-Quebec built three dams on the LaGrande River in the '80s. Three years after dams were complete, scientists found high levels of mercury in the river's fish. The mercury leached from rocks under the new, man-made reservoirs and then made its way into the food chain. More than half of the 4,000 Cree living in Chisasibi—a town near the LaGrande, 100 miles south of Great Whale—live with higher-than-normal mercury levels.

None of them eat walleye and trout from the river's lower parts.

Down, but not out: Quebec, meanwhile, intends to appeal Rouleau's ruling based on a decision the province won over Canada's National Energy Board, according to Quebec's Environmental Minister Pierre Paradis. The federal court ruled the energy board can't require a federal environmental assessment before export contracts are approved.

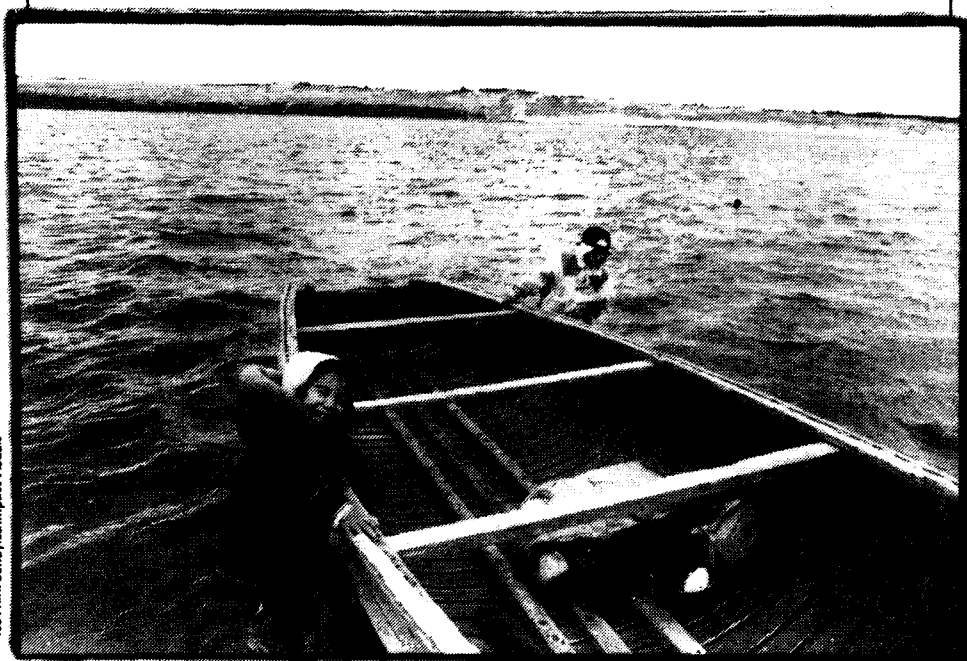
It's unclear whether Hydro-Quebec can begin work on the project during the appeal, as it did during cases involving the LaGrande Dams. But it is clear that even before Rouleau's decision, Paradis and Hydro-Quebec were on the ropes. Under fire from environmentalists and faced with the likelihood of mass civil disobedience from Canada's native community, Paradis had already told Hydro-Quebec it can't build until the environmental impacts of proposed dams, reservoirs and needed supply roads and airports are studied by Quebec engineers. This was a major shift for Paradis, who until late August said Quebec wouldn't cooperate with a separate, less-strict federal review and would let Hydro-Quebec bulldoze the first roads to Great Whale September 12.

The Cree remain cautious because, despite the public turnaround, Quebec is still fighting a Cree lawsuit brought to stop the utility from building until an independent assessment of the roads and dams is complete. "They're telling the public one thing and saying something else in court," says Bill Namagoose, executive director of the Cree Grand Council. Paradis could be trying to pacify the 60 percent of Quebecers who now oppose the dams, as well as the growing number of U.S. opponents, whom Paradis

Continued on page 10

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Inuit children prepare for a family hunting trip across Hudson Bay.



Dam

Continued from page 9

credited with his delay, Namagoose says.

Dam yankees: One of these "Dam Yankees"—as Quebec's version of *60 Minutes* dubs American environmental opponents—says she's happy grass-roots work has put Canada's largest corporation on the defensive. Still, she's skeptical. "We nudged the mountain and it growled back at us, but we want to bring the mountain down," says Doris Delaney of New York's Protect. "But the bottom line is, nothing has changed. We don't need more studies. The project is untenable and should be cancelled."

The only sure result of the delays, all sides agree, is breathing room. "It's good, eh, it gives us time to drive a stake through [the dam's] heart," says Namagoose. But, he concedes, Hydro-Quebec's public-relations machine also gets a year of recession to pitch the bene-

fits of \$20-an-hour jobs in the north. "We know Quebec is going to go on the offensive now. So the fight coming up over the next year will be the crucial battle in this war."

That battle may be fought in New York State, where the New York Power Authority (NYPA) is Hydro-Quebec's largest export customer. Cree leaders and environmentalists say New York's two contracts with Hydro-Quebec, worth \$19 billion total, would essentially finance construction of the Great Whale dams. With a debt service of \$23 billion, the Quebec utility simply can't afford the effort without American capital, environmentalists say.

Armed with state-authored energy studies that show conservation is cheaper than Hydro-Quebec's juice, environmentalists are telling New Yorkers to boycott Quebec power. Under pressure, the NYPA in August put off finalizing its contracts with Hydro-Quebec for 11 months. The state energy broker wants time to ponder whether it

needs 1,800 megawatts from Canada.

Environmentalists argue the NYPA should put money into demand-side management—industry jargon for energy-efficient air-conditioners and lightbulbs—not jobs outside the U.S. And NYPA now says state-wide recession and conservation efforts have lowered New York's projected annual electricity growth from 1.1 percent to .5 percent since it entered the agreements in 1989. "It's now appropriate to re-evaluate the contract in light of those changes," says Power Authority Chairman Richard Flynn.

A few days later, Gov. Mario Cuomo said he'd meet with Coon-Come and ordered the State Planning Board to report on the environmental and economic effects of pulling out of the deal. "The Great Whale project has provoked passionate responses," said Cuomo, who has virtually sole oversight of the NYPA. "New York's decision ... should be based on a dispassionate review of all the facts."

Dam opponents say Cuomo has enough facts to simply kill the deals. "In the state's own energy master plan, their own figures show that New York State would lose \$1.7 billion plus over the life of this contract," says Richard Mayer, a member of the Northeast Alliance to Save James Bay. Hydro's prices would remain constant while in-state alternatives will become more competitive in the next two decades, the studies say.

Both Flynn and Cuomo say pulling out of hydro contracts could increase reliance on imported fossil fuels, which create carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide when burned. But if conservation doesn't make up for Hydro-Quebec power (roughly 7 percent of the state's entire energy supply), studies issued from Albany and New York list alternatives to foreign petroleum: the defunct Shoreham nuclear plant could be converted to natural gas; hydro-electric power within New York could be freed from industrial use and made available to residents, and factories that generate surpluses can also provide power, the reports say. The Crees, meanwhile, will watch closely as the state Senate and state Energy Planning Board hold hearings (and a state-wide anti-dam bike tour winds down in time for benefit concerts and rallies) in Manhattan. "We're concerned that Quebec, or New York, will say, 'OK, there was an environmental assessment, therefore we can proceed,'" says Namagoose.

If Quebec does proceed, Crees vow to put their bodies between bulldozers and the bush. Only a week before Paradis' turnaround, Ovide Mercredi, a vice chief of the Assembly of First Nations, told a Cree Grand Council to count on help from all of Canada's First Nations in non-violent civil disobedience. "We're going to make it physically impossible for them to build these dams," says Matthew Mukash, who leads local opposition to dams in Whapmagoostui, the Cree side of Great Whale. This spring, 600 Cree blockaded a construction site on the LaGrande, stopping work for four hours, Mukash noted. But Mercredi's pledge foreshadows the largest act of civil disobedience in North America since the civil rights movement.

Strength through peace: Both Crees and Inuits pledge non-violence. But they are asking: if the provincial police force, Surete Quebec, was called in over a proposed golf course on sacred Mohawk burial grounds, what will it do for the right to develop 400,000 square miles?

What exactly is at stake? By 2010, Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa hopes to dam almost every river flowing into the east side of James Bay, a saltwater gulf that feeds Hudson Bay. By 2020, he proposes turning James Bay into a huge storage tank for fresh water by crossing it with a 300-mile dike. The water would then be sold to parched areas of the U.S. To Bourassa, James Bay development is the French-speaking minority's key to economic and political independence.

The Cree, whose economic independence depends on healthy rivers, now say they'll secede from Quebec if the province leaves Canada. To Mukash, who lived in the bush until he was nine, damming the Great Whale isn't worth the energy. "It wasn't until about 20 years ago that we started using electricity to heat our homes, even to cook," he says. "So when we see cities in the south with buildings and used-car lots lit all night like football fields, it's hard for us to hear how they need all this power."

Malcolm Howard is a journalist living in New York.

How to Be Religious Without Losing Your Mind



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Will the real Chetniks please stand up?

By Paul Hockenos

BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA

IN THE ENDLESS VOLLEYS OF CURSES THAT SERBS and Croats trade these days, references to the "Serbian Chetnik terrorists" and the "fascist Ustashe Croats" come up again and again.

With civil war raging, each nationality has stopped at nothing to portray the other as the more hell-bent nationalist and virulent reactionary. In Yugoslavia, where nearly 10 percent of the population perished during World War II, the resurrection of images from the country's wartime nationalist foes—the Chetniks in Serbia and the Ustashe in Croatia—stir potent emotions.

In Croatia today, the Serbian irregulars fighting alongside the federal army in Croatia have one and all been branded "Chetniks" by the Croats—named for the historic right-wing royalist Serbian-Chetnik movement. For the Serbs, the nationalist government in Croatia is the living embodiment of the brutal Ustashe regime that ruled the puppet Croatian state under Nazi supervision from 1941 to 1944.

The flurry of propaganda is naturally self-serving.

At the same time, a shocking proliferation of neo-fascist groups has accompanied the explosion of ethnic hatreds in Yugoslavia. Banned since 1945, the ultra-nationalist Serbian Radical Party (SRP), or Chetniks, and the extreme-right Croatian Party of Law (CPL), or Ustashe, have made disturbing comebacks. The extremists are still on the periphery of the political arena, and are in no way accountable for the popular identification alleged in nationalist propaganda. But both the Chetniks and the Ustashe have amassed considerable followings and figure increasingly into ruling regimes' political game plans.

In the Serbian capital, strains of old Serbian marching songs waft through the shop-lined pedestrian lanes of Belgrade's Knez Mihaila Street. In the middle of the bustling thoroughfare, young men sporting thick, gnarled beards and army green caps with Chetnik insignia man the SRP's tables. A few admirers stop to chat with the Chetniks, occasionally buying a copy of their newspaper or browsing through the nationalist memorabilia for sale. Some simply stroll by and flash the three-finger Chetnik salute.

On Serbian television, the bellicose nationalist speeches of Chetnik leader Vojislav Seselj are aired without comment. At a Chetnik rally, the television shows a "peaceful demonstration" protesting "the crimes of the Ustashe Croats against the innocent Serb minority." Amid a sea of old Serbian and royalist flags, the nationalists wave pictures of medieval Serbian princes. "Blow up the Tito mausoleum—Tito, the greatest Serb hater of them all!" and "Death to [Croatian President Franjo] Tudjman!" shout the Chetniks, "Death to the Ustashe state!"

At one of the party's tables, a young supporter, Yovan, describes "Field Marshal" Seselj as "the greatest fighter ever against communism." That the 36-year-old sociology professor spent eight years in prison for a Marxist-inspired tract that compared Tito's Yugoslavia with Stalinist Eastern Europe, Yovan doesn't mention. Fresh out of prison, Seselj founded the SRP in early 1990, when the name "Chetnik" was still officially taboo. In a special election this summer, he won a parliamentary seat in one of Belgrade's working-class districts.

The Chetniks harken back to a 400-year tradition, beginning with one of the early Serb resistance movements under the Ottoman Empire. In Serbian, "Chetnik" means "guerrilla fighter." During World War II, the royalist Serbian Orthodox Christian movement sought unsuccessfully to align itself with Nazi Germany. The three-way civil war that ensued among Communist Partisans, the Chetniks and the Ustashe finally took as many Yugoslav lives as the country lost fighting the Axis powers.

Although the World War II Chetniks fought alongside the Germans and committed ugly wartime atrocities, their ideology was always monarchist, not fascist. "That's the difference between the Chetniks of today and yesterday," says Belgrade sociologist Sonja Licht. "Seselj and his crew are closer to fascism itself. Theirs is one of the darkest ideologies in post-communist Eastern Europe."

Greater Serbia: As the war front today moves westward, the Chetniks see their "dream of a Greater Serbia" coming true. Yet, even among the often inflated opinions of how big a Greater Serbia should be, the Chetniks' demands are radical. SRP General Secretary Vojin Vuletic insists that only Slovenia and a tiny part of northern Croatia are not historically Serbian. "There is no such thing as Croatia," he says at the first mention of the enemy republic. "As Hegel said, there are only two autonomous Slav nations in the Balkans—the Serbs and the Bulgarians."

Thus, according to Vuletic, there is no reason why the Serbs in so-called Croatia should live as a minority under a wicked nation. "The Croats are a genocidal people with a dangerous feeling of inferiority toward the Serbs," explains Vuletic gruffly from behind a pair of rose-tinted John Lennon specs. "Croatia never paid for its World War II genocide in which 700,000 Serbs were massacred." Instead, argues the 40-year-old agricultural engineer, "the greatest Ustashe ideologist ever," former Yugoslav President Marshal Tito, rewarded them with their own republic encompassing territory that they never had before.

The Croatian government's labeling of the entire Serbian minority's territorial defense in Croatia as "Chetnik" is wholly without basis. Yet, the SRP concentrates its efforts on supplying the Serb forces in Croatia with men, medical equipment, food and weaponry. The SRP claims 50 recruitment offices in Serbia that send men over 25 years of age fully equipped to the front. There, they fight under the command of the Serbian territorial defense of Slavonia—not in the federal army or as separate Chetnik units.

With numbers and details about their role on the front, the Chetniks are not so forthcoming. But their arms, says Vuletic, come from the Croatian black market, which today is flooded with weapons. Four months ago, he says, a Thomson machine gun cost \$1,500. Today, a Kalashnikov goes for \$500. The SRP

also has headquarters in the republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Serbia's contested southern province of Kosovo, the home of 2 million ethnic Albanians.

In domestic politics, the Chetniks have found a strange bed-fellow in the ruling Serbian Socialist Party (SSP). The nationalist, reform communist SSP paved the way for Seselj's entry into parliament and now collaborates closely with Seselj, its old foe. "The Socialists are clearly using the Chetniks to

YUGOSLAVIA

fight the democratic opposition," says Licht. "Without the SSP's help, the Chetniks would still be the band of 100 hooligans they were a year ago."

Dubious democrats: In Croatia, Seselj's counterpart, Dobroslov Paraga, president of the CPL, more commonly known as the Ustashe, is also in his mid-30s, bright and with dissident past. During the '70s and '80s, Paraga's reputation as a human rights campaigner was unsurpassed in Yugoslavia. Finally, in 1985, his work on behalf of political prisoners such as Seselj landed him behind bars for two years.

Today, the former dissident still considers himself an opposition democrat. The legacy of his party, however, points in another direction. In 1941, CPL and Ustashe movement leader Ante Pavelic came to power with the backing of Hitler and Mussolini. The ferocity of the Ustashe's three-year reign shocked even its Axis allies. By the war's end, 85 percent of the Croatian Jewry and hundreds of thousands of Serbs and Gypsies had been murdered in independent Croatia's notorious camps.

But, claims Paraga, that aspect of the party's past was an unfortunate aberration. Grounded as a liberal-democratic party in the 19th century, the CPL split in the '30s. "The Party of Law is much older than the Ustashe and has a solidly democratic tradition," said Paraga in a recent interview. "We see our roots in the CPL legacy of more than 130 years ago. We have nothing to do with the Ustashe."

Yet in the CPL's Zagreb and Split offices, Pavelic's photo adorns giant wall maps of Greater Croatia. The borders depicted correspond to those of the fascist Ustashe state, which included parts of present-day Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. "The map forces Croats to reach back into their consciousness, to remember what Croatia once was, and what it could be and should be," explains Paraga. Actually, he says, the borders that he envisions for a Greater Croatia are those of the 9th-century kingdom of Karl Tomislav.

Outside the Zagreb offices, the CPL's backers show a less moderate face. In the Adriatic city of Split, the party's south Croatia representative, Jozo Radanovic, says he identifies fully with the old Ustashe ideology, yet refutes the historical evidence of the regime's wartime atrocities. "The stories about the

Ustashe massacres were lies," he says. "It was Chetniks in Ustashe uniforms who carried out the executions."

The movement's stronghold is in southern Croatia and western Herzegovina. Since early this year, fascist graffiti has covered the crumbling Roman walls of Split's seaport. Gangs of Ustashe youth, who have formed their own party, regularly marched outside the flats of Serb citizens shouting, "Serbs out!" "March to Serbia!" and "Serbs, we will chop you to bits!" In the countryside, spray-painted Ustashe "U"s abound.

Croatian sociologist Srdjan Vcran explains the radicalism as a product of the general outburst of conservative nationalism in Yugoslavia. "The mainstream is so right-wing that anything to the right of that is going to be fascist," he says. "The youth in Split today cannot possibly go any further right than they already have. There is nothing more extreme than the Ustashe's position."

The ultra-right's influence in Croatian politics remains a matter of speculation. A critical ultra-right wing within Croatian politics has made itself increasingly vocal as the war outlook for Croatia has grown bleaker and bleaker. Whether that nationalist current identifies with the CPL or not, the ideology that it promotes isn't far afield.

In fact, neither the Seseljs nor the Paragas control the elements that they've managed to exploit. Already in both Serbia and Croatia, for example, numerous smaller groups have laid claim to being the "real Chetniks" and the "real Ustashe."

The wave of conservative nationalism has its own dynamic, which opportunists may ride for a while. But with no sign of nationalism ebbing, it is an open question where that ride will end. □

Insight For The Progressive Mind

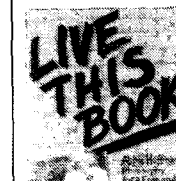


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Across the globe, 1991 has been a tumultuous year. The past nine months' remarkable events—the Gulf War, the fall of Soviet Communism, the worldwide rise of nationalism—will have profound impact on geopolitics for many years to come. Without doubt, a new world order is emerging—though perhaps not the one George Bush envisions. In *These Times* will be exploring the historical context and future implications of this new global configuration in a three-part series of essays, "A world in turmoil."

By Daniel Lazare

A few snapshots from the new world order:

- In the rapidly disintegrating Soviet Union, the Tatar autonomous region is seeking independence from the Russian republic, the newly formed Dniestrian Soviet Socialist Republic is seeking independence from Moldavia (which itself wants to become part of Romania), while war-torn South Ossetia is struggling to break away from Georgia and hook up with North Ossetia just across the Russian border. Vladimir Popov, a leading Soviet economist, estimates that 600,000 Soviet citizens are now homeless as a result of various inter-ethnic conflicts.

- In Eastern Europe, Lithuania's harsh treatment of its Polish minority has provoked a war of words with the Polish government in Warsaw. A few hundred miles to the south in Yugoslavia, bullets are flying between Croats and Serbs, while the Macedonian republic's bid of independence threatens to trigger a three-way struggle among Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia for control of the breakaway region.

- In Spain, 50,000 people rallying in Barcelona for Catalan independence cheer representatives of the Baltic states, newly free from the Soviet Union. In northern Italy, German-speaking South Tyrolian separatists draw encouragement from the independence of nearby Slovenia. Some 40 other regionalist movements throughout Europe take heart from recent events as well.

- In New York, an accident in which a Hasidic Jew runs over two black children leads to four nights of violence by black mobs screaming "Heil Hitler" and "Kill the Jews." Jewish groups label the rampage another *Kristallnacht*, the night of anti-Semitic riots that swept Nazi Germany in 1938.

The explosion of nationalism: Something is happening here, and for once what it seems fairly unmistakable. The modern world is undergoing one of its periodic nationalist convulsions, not unlike the 1790s, 1840s, or 1920s, although this time around a few things have changed. In contrast to the last explosion in the 1950s and '60s, for instance, the latest wave has bypassed most of the Third World (with the notable exceptions of India and Sri Lanka) and has burst upon most of the Second World and broad swaths of the First.

Previous movements were predominantly concerned with the creation of large national units out of smaller ones. But the current explosion is markedly centrifugal, with larger states spinning apart into smaller ones like Croatia, Catalonia or even Sorbia, a tiny slavic region in eastern Germany not to be confused with Serbia. Due to the abrupt Soviet collapse, the new wave is also highly concentrated. Suddenly, after 50 to 75 years in which nationalism was tightly controlled or severely repressed, people are saying it, loud and proud, that they're Ukrainian or Byelorussian, Lithuanian, Azeri, etc.

There is one other thing that distinguishes this upsurge from those before it. It is the

first generalized outbreak of nationalism in a century and a half unchecked or even unmitigated by any force to the left. After publication of the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, any European nationalist movement had to contend with socialist internationalism—even if, as in 1914, only glancingly. Socialist internationalism declared that interests of labor transcended national boundaries ("Workers of the world unite!") and banished—or tried to banish—nationalism to the dustbin of history. ("National differences ... are daily more and more vanishing," the *Manifesto* declared, with somewhat less than 100-percent accuracy.)

Eighty-odd years later, Joseph Stalin retrieved nationalism from the shelf, gave it a good dusting, and tried to turn it to his advantage, both internally and externally. His revisionism was sweeping, yet traces of the old internationalism lingered on in the communist movement, if only from singing the "Internationale" at weekly cell meetings.

Now even that is gone. With Soviet power dead, social democrats on the retreat from France to Sweden, and pundits everywhere proclaiming the death of socialism, the old internationalism is, at the very least, three-quarters out the door. In its place is a refurbished version of Woodrow Wilson's ideal of a community of sovereign nations, in which governments derive their powers from the consent of the governed and no group is required to submit to the domination of any other. However good it may sound on paper, the practice from Nagorno-Karabakh to New York City is distinctly rocky.

Nations within nations: The problem is the same one that doomed the Wilsonian ideal in the '20s—namely the fact that, with the possible exception of Iceland, no nation is homogeneous, but are all composed of subgroup upon subgroup. National independence in which any one group predominates inevitably sets off competitive nationalist movements among the minorities. If the solution is independence for the various subgroups as well, the result is ever greater fragmentation. The results can either be along Swiss lines, in which every mountain valley enjoys linguistic and cultural autonomy, or along Lebanese lines, in which every ethnic or religious group winds up with its own army and warlord, its own heroes and myths, and, of course, war unending.

Not that there aren't a few complicating factors to get in the way. Just as Woodrow Wilson set up the League of Nations to mediate national disputes, there are a number of supra-national political, economic



and corporate institutions aimed at checking some of the more extreme nationalist impulses. As Francis Fukuyama points out, no nation these days is so concerned with self-determination that it is willing to shut itself off from the consumer-capitalist table. Or as British Marxist historian E.J. Hobsbawm points out in his new book, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, international economic integration may simply render the national struggle irrelevant. After all, since a free Catalonia would undoubtedly apply for mem-

THE NEW DISO

How the rest of the globe is

bership in the European Community (EC) as one of its first acts after gaining independence, the overall effect would be nil.

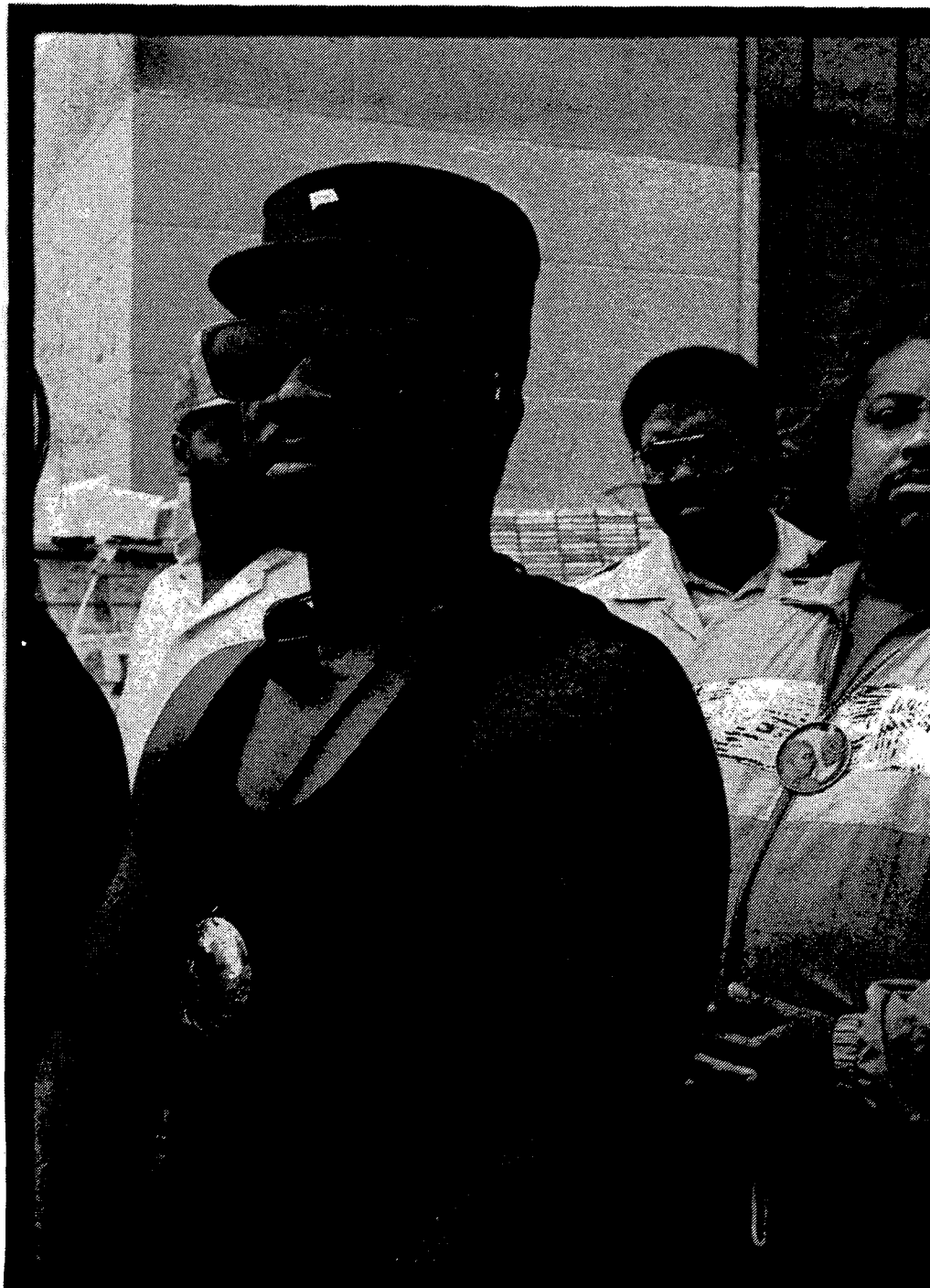
Perhaps. But what Hobsbawm neglects is the danger of a snowball effect in which nationalist passions feed off one another in a period of economic decay, gaining momentum and overpowering the most elementary good sense. No country deliberately sets out to become another Lebanon. After years of deepening mistrust and aggression, it's something people fall into, as they're now doing in the Balkans and beyond.

The planet Beirut: A recap of some of the highlights of a political order in decay:

In Lithuania, nationalist efforts to burnish the historical record reportedly has led to the government granting wholesale amnesty to Lithuanians convicted of war crimes in Soviet courts. The result has been outrage

among Jews. In Latvia, the parliament is debating an ethnic purity law that would limit citizenship to those with roots in the country prior to the 1940 Soviet takeover, thereby disenfranchising millions of post-war Russian immigrants.

In Russia, Boris Yeltsin's pronounced nationalist leanings have produced an equal and opposite reaction in the outlying republics. Although Yeltsin's draft constitution declares that "the Russian Federation is a sovereign ... state of historically united peoples" and "is indivisible," citizens of the independence-minded Tatar autonomous region beg to differ. As a few economists have pointed out—most notably unreconstructed supply-sider Jude Wanniski—the collapse of the ruble's value from \$1.25 to about two cents has triggered, throughout Soviet society, a headlong rush for tangible assets. Thus, the Russian Federation



An us-against-them America: Rev. Al Sharpton is at the center of black-Jewish tensions in Brooklyn.

WORLD

ORDER

starting to look like Lebanon

is threatening to withhold its oil from the other republics, while the Ukraine is holding back grain and Georgia is even threatening to embargo lemons. If it hasn't happened yet, it's only a matter of time before reindeer herders in eastern Siberia lay exclusive claim to their extensive gold deposits.

Meanwhile, anti-Semitism, nationalism's kissing cousin, is advancing in Poland and in Romania, where *In These Times* correspondent Paul Hockenos reports that it has risen nearly to the level of official state dogma. In the Ukraine, the right-wing Rukh movement is gaining strength, while the fascistic Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), an ally of the Nazis during World War II, recently staged a demonstration in full military regalia through the streets of Lvov. This is the same city in which OUN members ran through the streets during the Nazi occupation, shouting

"Long live Adolf Hitler" and "Death to the Jews and Communists," according to Christopher Simpson's 1988 book, *Blowback*.

Meanwhile, the East European nationalist upsurge has led to a marked reinvigoration of various regionalist movements in Western Europe. The *Financial Times* of London reports that the Austrian press has begun commenting excitedly on the growth of nationalism in German-speaking regions of northern Italy. And just like they did in the '20s and '30s, Italian neo-fascists have begun muttering darkly about an Austrian-inspired power grab.

In Spain, the temperature is rising due to growing separatist agitation not just in Catalonia, but in the Basques country and Galicia, just north of Portugal, as well. While such movements may strike Americans as quaint and romantic, they're resented by others in Spain as attempts to jump ship and

leave poorer regions to their own resources. Ultra-rightists like Jean-Marie Le Pen in France and Jorg Haider in Austria are climbing in the polls thanks to the migration of millions of Soviet and East European refugees now descending on the West. "What is happening now in Yugoslavia may well be almost a laboratory test for everything that will happen in Europe," French foreign minister Roland Dumas recently told the *London Guardian*.

One nation, divisible: It's in the United States, however, where centrifugal nationalism seems most bizarre. Although this country has no ethnically defined, geographically distinct areas such as Catalonia or Breton, the Balkans are proof that it doesn't matter and that a high degree of ethnic interpenetration may in fact make things worse.

In the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn, where blacks and members of the black-robed Lubavitcher Hasidic sect have coexisted uneasily for years, the explosion of violence that erupted on August 19—coincidentally, the same day the coup in Moscow was signalling a new stage in Soviet disintegration—was unlike anything New York had seen in decades. Historians searching for a parallel had to go back when Father Coughlin's fascist street toughs would beat up Jews in the late '30s.

As crowds surged through the streets smashing windows, throwing stones and assaulting Hasids, freelance nationalist agitators like Sonny Carson, Colin Moore, Alton Maddox and Al Sharpton rushed to take advantage of the situation. The fiery attempts to confer martyrdom on Gavin Cato, the seven-year-old black child killed by a runaway car driven by a Lubavitcher, were reminiscent of denunciations of Jewish ritual murder a century earlier. So was the Rev. Herbert Daughtry's warning that the fire could soon spread to other Hasidic neighborhoods as well.

Coming on the heels of a black-Italian confrontation in Bensonhurst and Carson's black-nationalist boycott of Korean shopkeepers in Bedford-Stuyvesant and Flatbush, the outbreak left Brooklyn feeling like its own mini-Balkans, poised on the edge of a general ethnic conflagration and ready to blow. "It's volatile, the type of situation where no one is fully relaxed," said Ed Rogowsky, a professor of urban studies at Brooklyn College.

Even those who have tended to dismiss fears of rising black anti-Semitism are being forced to reconsider. One such person is Al Kutzik, editor of *Jewish Affairs*, a publication of the Communist Party USA. A few days after the disorders, Kutzik took part in a public forum in Crown Heights, in which a mostly black audience of about 250 people erupted in boos and catcalls when he suggested that a problem of black anti-Semitism existed at all.

"I now have altered my views somewhat [about black anti-Semitism]," Kutzik said subsequently. "I now think a new and dangerous situation has arisen."

A feast of famine: The near-pogrom in Crown Heights occurred, of course, amid the growing controversy over multiculturalism and Afrocentrism. The first is best understood as a kind of inward-turning Wilsonianism, a domestic League of Nations, in which individuals are urged to celebrate their specific ethnic or racial heritage while participating in the great big friendly banquet that is American democracy. Chip Berlet, a writer on far-right nationalism and related topics, describes multiculturalism as

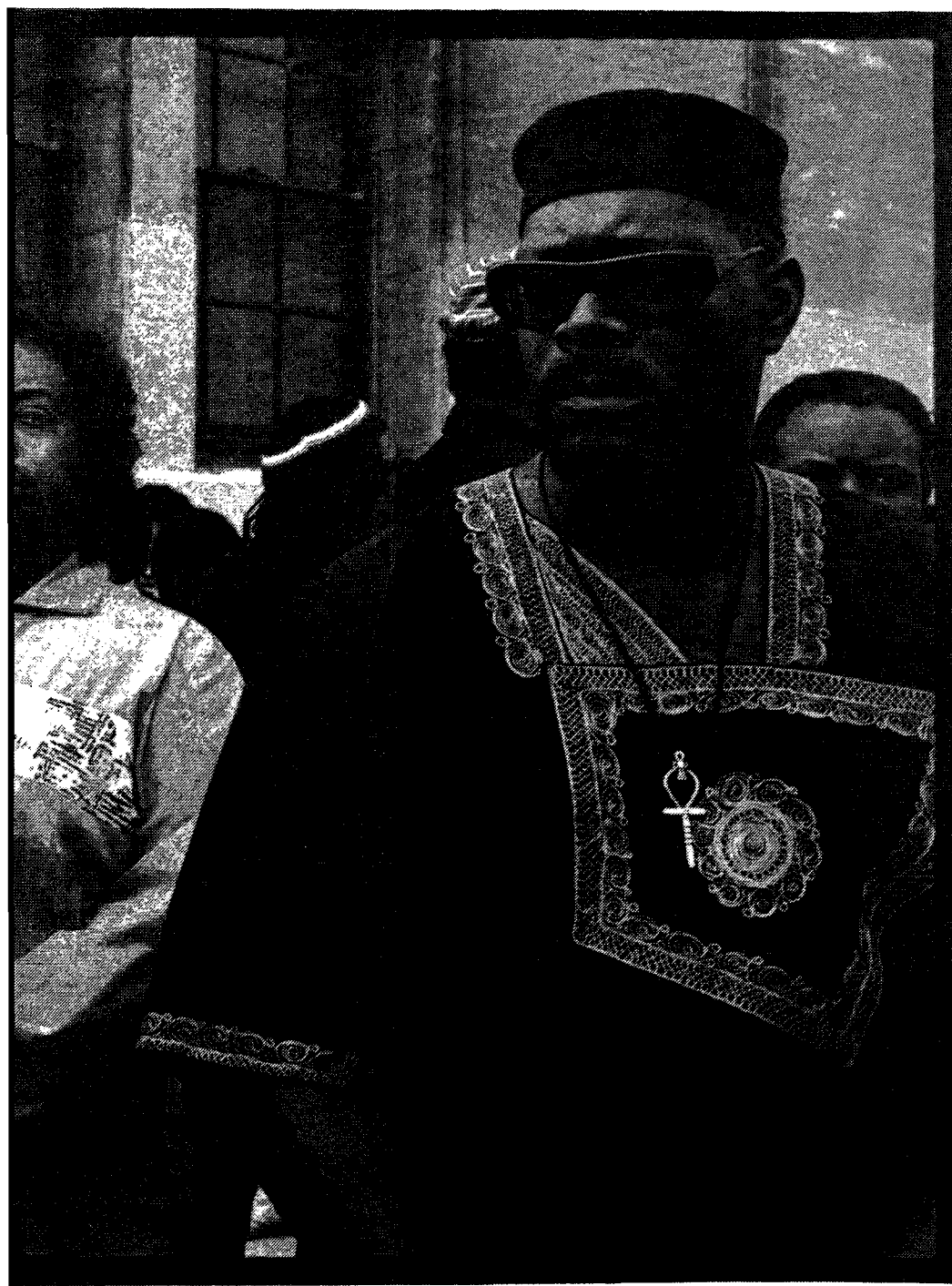
everybody bringing their "special dish to the common table." This sounds good until the question arises of which special dish to bring. Should Franco-Americans, for example, bring Parisian-style haute cuisine or bouillabaisse à la Marseillaise? Pasta with red sauce for Italians or polenta for those from north of the Po River? Should everyone take a taste from each, nodding appreciatively over each dish in order to avoid giving offense? Will ferocious debates erupt over what constitutes the culinary canon?

There's enough in this sort of multi-culty democratic nationalism and ethnic fetishism to fuel a hundred cultural wars. Leonard Jeffries, New York's most notorious afrocen-trist, is a case in point. Jeffries, head of African Studies at the City College of New York, alternates between thumping his chest over various African cultural contributions to world culture—everything, it seems, from mathematics to monotheism and chess—and attacking various non-Africans for stealing that heritage away. He is a classic racial essentialist who believes in an "African Holy Ghost" that animates black behavior. He repeatedly characterizes opponents in quasi-theological terms as "devilish." In a now-famous lecture this July, Jeffries attributed cinematic racism not to individual Hollywood moguls who, for various historical reasons, happened to be Jewish, but to a "conspiracy" by "Russian Jewry."

Undoubtedly, there are any number of Serbian nationalists at this moment huffing and puffing over Croatian devils conspiring to rob them of their birthright, Croatians going on in the same way about Serbs, Ukrainian nationalists about Russians, and so on. Whether one group is on the top or the bottom, is dominant or oppressed, hardly matters since the underlying message is the same.

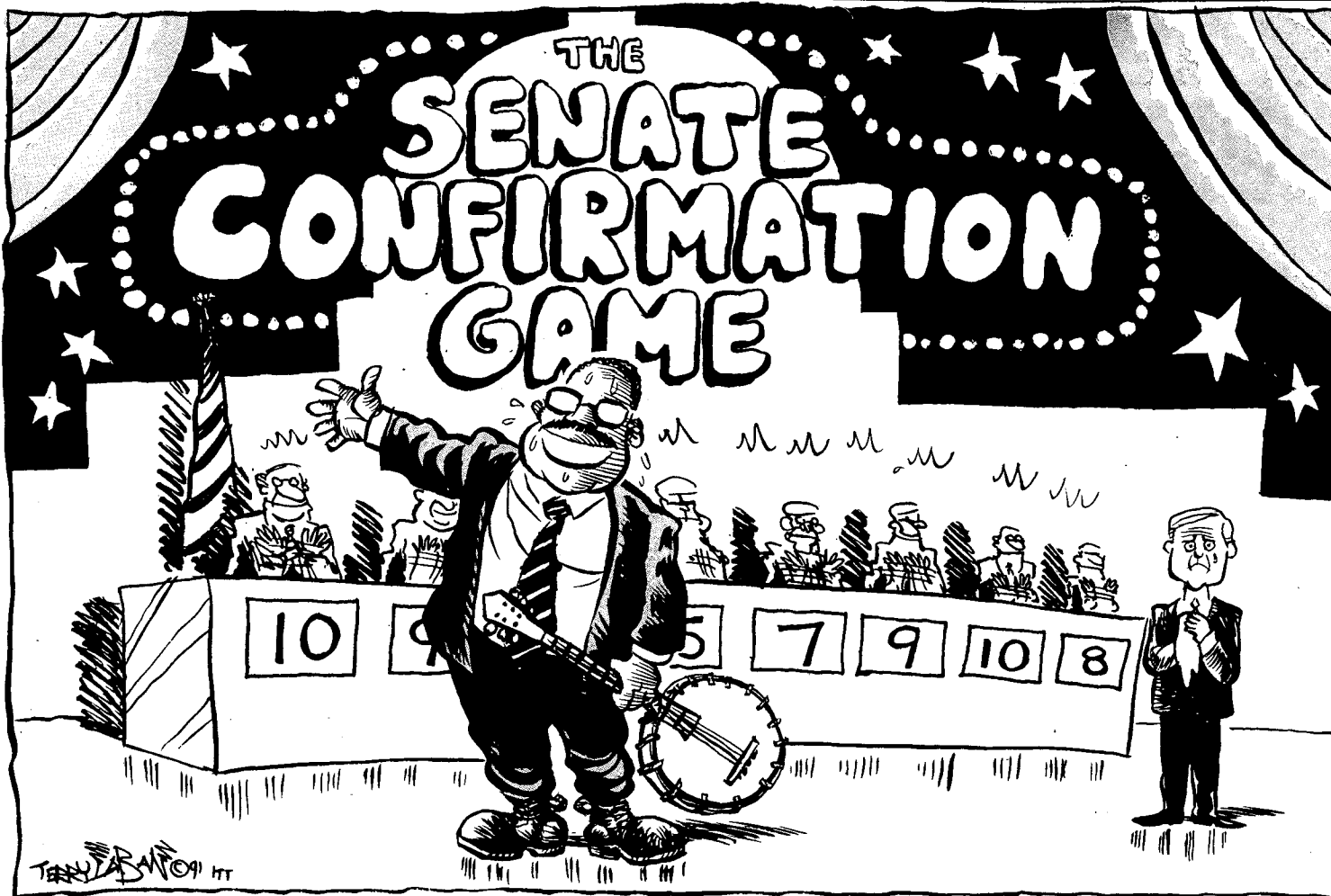
A solution: What is to be done (as a famous socialist internationalist once asked)? It's certainly not fighting fire with fire, as a generation of black intellectuals have tried to do vis-a-vis the Jews by becoming more nationalist than the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and the pro-Israel establishment. Nor is it in taking refuge in some sort of liberal U.S. nationalism à la certain socialists-turned-protectionists, in which Jews, blacks, WASPs, et al. unite to fight rapacious Japanese trade practices. As with other forms of nationalism, the American variety means the suppression of competing kinds of nationalism. These days, it particularly takes aim at black nationalism, whose supporters wonder, quite legitimately, why they should suppress their own national aspirations in favor of those of a country that continues to deny them first-class citizenship.

Rather, the answer lies in internationalism. The "nation" is an idea invented around the time of the French Revolution, which no more sums up the totality of human experience two centuries later than "county" or "municipality." In an era of instantaneous global communications and a rising volume of world trade, the nation-state has never been more outmoded. This is why nationalism has never seemed so hysterical and neurotic, particularly in economically developed portions of the world that should have put petty chauvinism behind them. From Leonard Jeffries to Yitzhak Shamir to Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic, it's this hyper-attenuated quality that makes nationalism at this late date so absurd, yet which also makes it so undeniably dangerous. □



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EDITORIAL



"AND IT LOOKS LIKE CLARENCE THOMAS HAS MANAGED TO IMPRESS THE PANEL WITH HIS MOVING RENDITION OF 'MY OL' GRANDPA'. WE'LL HAVE THE FINAL DECISION SOON. MEANWHILE, LET'S WELCOME OUR NEXT CONTESTANT, ROBERT GATES, NOMINEE FOR CIA HEAD, WITH HIS VERSION OF 'I'M SORRY NOW'..."

The Senate avoids its constitutional duty

The Spanish-American war in 1898 led to the U.S. annexation of the Philippines and then to a legal dispute about the rights of Filipinos under the Constitution. A series of Supreme Court cases ensued, the upshot of which was to decide that natives of subordinate areas did not enjoy the rights of American citizens. Commenting on these decisions, America's greatest satirist, Finley Peter Dunne, wrote that "no matter whether the Constitution follows the flag or not, the Supreme Court follows the election returns."

We were reminded of this when Republican senators complained during Clarence Thomas' confirmation hearings that the nominee's critics were unfairly dragging politics into the process. They believed, they said, that Thomas should be questioned on his personal background, character and legal competence, not on his views on issues like abortion or affirmative action.

Ironically, the Democratic chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Joseph Biden, also complained about politics being imposed on the nominating process. President Bush had nominated Thomas, Biden lamented, because of his political views. "I yearn for the day... when a president, Democratic or Republican, picks a nominee simply based on [the president's] overall instinct about what their intellectual capacity is, and not on what their views are," he said.

It was left to White House consultant Kenneth Duberstein to say the obvious—that the process of nominating Supreme Court justices has always been political. Duberstein said this, of course, to justify the bank of White House advisors sitting behind Thomas to make sure that, in Duberstein's words, Thomas "made a powerful witness with his compelling personal story." Duberstein, too, wanted to avoid political substance, even while he upheld narrow political partisanship.

Hot air: The hearings told the American people a lot less about Thomas than was already on record before he began to testify. The Republicans, of course, wanted it that way. It was smart practical politics to nominate an African-American who shares their views, but it would have been a disaster for them if he had espoused these views on television.

Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) did see "the vanishing views of Judge Thomas" as a major issue in the hearings. Yet while we share Kennedy's regrets that Thomas obscured his opinions rather than clarifying them, that is what the current hearing process is designed

to do. Having the nominee testify is a way of avoiding discussion of underlying philosophy and views on specific issues, except on those rare occasions when a nominee like Robert Bork is either arrogant or foolish enough to tell all.

But nominees have testified regularly only since bipartisanship came into style with the Cold War. Before 1955 only two Supreme Court nominees, Harlan Fiske Stone in 1925 and Felix Frankfurter in 1939, had ever testified in person before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Nominees' qualifications and views were traditionally evaluated on the basis of their records in public life, and decisions were reached in the light of these factors and according to the political balance of forces in the Senate. As Thomas admitted in answer to a question by Biden, even if he had a personal agenda he would not admit it at his hearing. Instead, Thomas spent most of his time, when he was forced to stop talking about his grandfather, explaining away views he had previously expressed and actions he had taken when he worked for the Reagan administration.

If Thomas had not testified, if the senators had been forced to rely on the substance of his adult life to make a decision, few Democrats would have been able to support his nomination. For a moment we would actually have had a two-party system in operation, and the American people would have been informed rather than bamboozled.

It's true that many senators are upset by the current process because it demeans the institution of the Supreme Court. As Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA) recounted, except for Bork, recent nominees have told the committee little, but all who bit their tongues were confirmed. And as Sen. Alan Simpson (R-WY) mused, "We are slowly going to get to the point where we will just not know anybody at all when they get here. Some big zip will be presented to us and we will mess around trying to figure out who he or she is, and the more zip the better chance they will have."

Shirking responsibility: But the problem in most cases is not that little is known about nominees. It is that the Senate is unwilling to play its constitutional role as an equal in the nominating process. In the first draft of the Constitution, the Senate, not the president, was given the power of nominating Supreme Court justices. This was later changed so that the president nominated with the Senate's advice and consent. Recent presidents have not sought advice and they have acted as if consent was purely a technical matter, owed to them if the nominee was not discovered to be personally corrupt.

That, however, is the Senate's doing. A Democratic majority in the Senate has as much right to determine who is nominated to the Supreme Court as does a Republican president. When senators fail to exercise that right, they abdicate their responsibility to the American people.

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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In These Times believes that to guarantee our life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, Americans must take greater control over our nation's basic economic and foreign policy decisions. We believe in a socialism that fulfills rather than subverts the promise of American democracy, where social needs and rationality, not corporate profit and greed, are the operative principles. Our pages are open to a wide range of views, socialist and nonsocialist, liberal and conservative. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

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NATIONAL WRITERS UNION

GOU

LETTERS

Illinois not needed

I AM SORRY TO SEE MARCUS G. RASKIN IN YOUR September 4 issue repeat the old Nixonite myth that the Kennedys "stole the [1960] election with the connivance of Richard J. Daley's Chicago Democratic machine." If Raskin would take the trouble to examine the figures he would discover that Kennedy, if he had lost Illinois, would still have won by 276 to 246 in the electoral college.

Arthur Schlesinger Jr.
New York

Extrapolation

I HAVE NOTICED THAT IN THESE TIMES HAS BEEN denouncing affirmative action editorially (editorial, July 24). Since it seems that this is spreading opinion in liberal and social-democratic circles, I think you owe it to your readers to expand upon exactly what you mean.

For example, affirmative action is often spoken of as if it applied only in a racial context; this allows opponents of these measures to play upon decades of racial sentiment. But it is well known that affirmative action is also based on gender, and a major beneficiary has been non-minority women. Is *In These Times* opposed to this kind of affirmative action too?

The hearings on the Clarence Thomas nomination have been instructive in this regard. In a striking colloquy, Sen. Joseph Biden (D-DE) noted that sons and daughters of alumni receive a form of affirmative action that provides them with preferential treatment when they apply to Ivy League schools. In the famous *Bakke* case, the court could not get around the fact that schools have an interest in promoting "diversity," and that meant that one with lower grades and test scores from Montana of whatever nationality had a better chance of getting into Princeton than one with "better" qualifications from New Jersey. Is *In These Times* concerned about these forms of "reverse discrimination"? And, if so, what do you propose in their place, e.g., that everyone from Princeton should come from elite prep schools?

In another colloquy with Judge Thomas, Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA) pointed out that goals and timetables are useful tools to employ against egregious violators of anti-discrimination law in order to guard against future violations and obviate the emergence of future victims. I assume *In These Times* stands with Judge Thomas and the neo-conservatives and against Sen. Specter, the National Organization for Women and the civil rights community.

Let's face it. The GOP is bashing affirmative action in order to make white folks think this is why they're losing their jobs; it worked for Jesse Helms. At the same time, they're pursuing affirmative action as the Thomas and Colin Powell appointments demonstrate. Instead of acting like Michael Dukakis and running from our principles, we should stand on them. Economic growth by itself will not guarantee equality absent special measures like affirmative action. I'm all for "class-based politics," but minorities and non-minority women are the backbone of the working class—as many white males

forget from time to time—and this class cannot advance as long as they're handcuffed by discrimination. Does *In These Times* feel differently?

Gerald Horne
Research Fellow/Scholar-in-Residence
Carter G. Woodson Institute for
Afro-American and African Studies
Charlottesville, Va.

Editor's reply: *In These Times* has never denounced affirmative action editorially. We support affirmative action for racial minorities and women, and we always have.

Apparently Gerald Horne is referring to a sentence that appeared in our July 24 editorial. It advocated "comprehensive health care, affordable child care and equitable education from pre-school through apprenticeship or university." If made available equally to all who need it, the editorial said, this program "would probably benefit African-Americans more than current affirmative-action programs and at the same time lessen racial frictions."

The point is one we've often made before. It is that American politics have been set up in a way that requires different groups to compete against each other for resources made scarce by the policies of a series of Cold War administrations. Reordering the social priorities of our government would free up resources that could be used to solve a wide range of problems that racial minorities and women have in common with working people in general. Eliminating the competition imposed on them by current priorities would serve to reduce racial tensions, we argued.

This is not an argument against affirmative action, nor does it address the areas in which affirmative action would still be required even if basic social needs were met.

Buy and bust

CRIMINAL POSSESSION OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE in the third degree" and "criminal sale of controlled substance in the third degree" were the two most common charges presented to me in 151 cases as a grand juror by a variety of assistant district attorneys in the past four weeks. They asked me and 22 other "narcotics" grand jurors to indict the unseen defendants for possession and sale of very small amounts of crack-cocaine and heroin.

Evidence was usually presented by undercover "buy and bust" plain-clothes detectives from the Manhattan TNT (Tactical Narcotics Team). An officer would approach a drug seller and ask for "two" meaning two vials of crack-cocaine or "manteca" (heroin in Spanish) or specific brand names of heroin. The names stamped

on the glassine packets the sellers provided were colorful; come and get it, check me, hardcore, shadow, happyland. Once the seller accepted the payment he/she was arrested by the first officer's "ghost," his/her back-up partner. The drugs seized were vouchered at the precinct and then sent to the police lab for analysis; to determine the amount of pure crack-cocaine or heroin they contained.

Each case had the same script. The same litany was repeated daily for 20 mornings by several dozen different assistant district attorneys. It seems drugs can be bought everywhere in Manhattan; Harlem, the East Village, Chelsea-Clinton and the Upper West-side.

I was told that only 15 to 20 percent of the cases in which the grand jury indicts go to trial. The rest are plea-bargained and the defendants get light sentences or probation.

I think that the possession or sale of small amounts of controlled substances to adults should be decriminalized. In a time when New York City and state are in a severe fiscal crisis, millions of dollars could be saved by not employing police in "buy and bust" operations, not having assistant district attorneys prosecuting these cases and not calling on grand juries to return indictments. Police could be deployed to deter street and subway crime (robberies and assaults), while assistant district attorneys could tackle more important cases in our overburdened criminal justice system.

By changing the law, money saved could be used for drug rehabilitation programs for the "criminals" in "buy and bust" operations, most of whom sell to support their own drug habits.

A total rethinking of our criminal justice system in relation to narcotics is needed, leading to significant changes in state and federal laws.

Howard Pfanzer
New York

Yankee Rowe

CONGRATULATIONS FOR THE BEST PRESS COVERAGE of the relicensing of the Yankee Rowe Atomic Plant in Massachusetts in Shannon Fagan's August 21 report. As people who have both followed and participated in the actions described, we would like to add two missing bits of information. First, Robert Pollard, who you describe correctly as a scientist working with the Union of Concerned Scientists, was formerly an engineer at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Indeed, Pollard made the comment in his Boston press interview that

"now that I am no longer working for the NRC I don't need to lie to people."

Second, on the first day of the public meeting at Rowe, Yankee Atomic had filled the auditorium where the meeting was held with employees and their families. Although the public was forced to sit outside on the grass on an uncomfortably hot night and listen to the proceedings coming through a p.a. system, the hungry mosquitoes and poor quality of the sound system could not discourage the hundreds who came to listen. We see this as a demonstration of the arrogance and disrespect with which the NRC and Yankee Atomic view the public's right to know.

Barbara and Alvin Winder
Amherst, Mass.

Ideas into action

WE APPRECIATE *IN THESE TIMES*' RECENT INCREASED education coverage, including Eleanor Bader's review of *Savage Inequalities* by Jonathan Kozol (ITT, Aug. 21). Bader writes that when she finished the book she was ready to organize against "the racism and classism that undergirds education," but that Kozol gave her no ideas about where to start.

NCEA, the National Coalition of Education Activists, was formed to help parents, teachers and other progressives find ways to attack racism, classism and other problems with our schools. We are committed to:

- School reform guided by a broad vision of social change.
- New approaches to schooling that reject the factory model now so prevalent.
- Fighting racism in schools and among reformers.
- Encouraging and sharing grass-roots efforts.

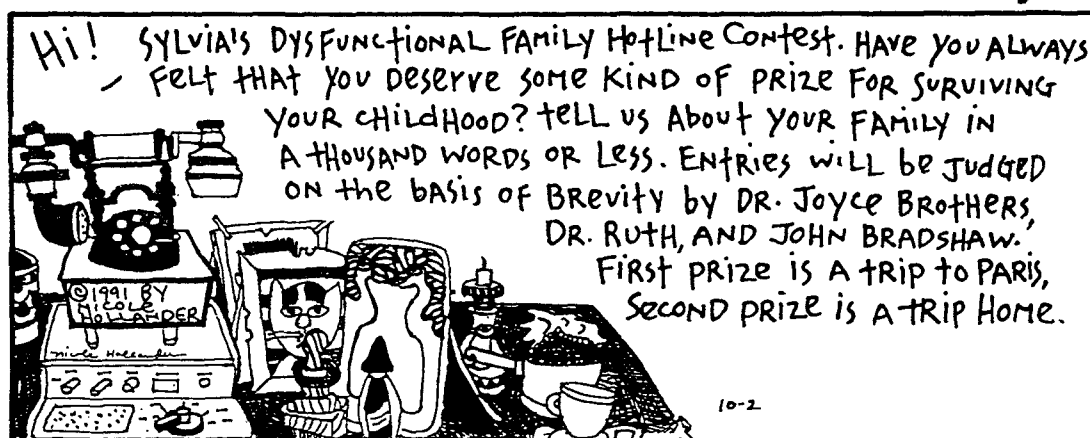
Our members are involved in a range of struggles to improve public schools: working for parent input in Chicago and Toledo, fighting tracking in Selma, creating small collaborative schools in New York and Milwaukee, and battling budget cuts everywhere.

NCEA includes parents, teachers and community activists from all racial and ethnic groups, classes and parts of the country. We believe local efforts are the key, but we also know the value of sharing our successes, failures and resources.

We encourage anyone concerned about education and tired of fighting each battle in isolation to contact us at: NCEA, P.O. Box 405, Rosendale, NY 12472.

Lola Glover
NCEA Co-chair, Toledo, Ohio
Bob Peterson
NCEA Co-chair, Milwaukee, Wis.
Debi Duke
Executive Director, Kingston, N.Y.

SYLVIA



by Nicole Hollander

By Tim Wohlforth

IN EASTERN EUROPE, AS THE STALINIST system collapsed, the people stormed the headquarters of the secret police. They uncovered the political dossiers and they burned them. And in the Soviet Union after the coup, the KGB's files started to open as the new chief declared his intention drastically to reduce its powers. These are revolutionary acts because political control of the people is the very heart of totalitarianism. In a democracy, the government is supposed to represent the people and to direct the state in serving their interests. Under totalitarianism, the people are required to serve government and state.

Real life is considerably more complex. We live in a democracy where the government continues to maintain political dossiers and to act at times independently of, and oppressively toward, the people it is elected to represent. We need only to think of Watergate and the more recent Contra-gate scandal. I do not suggest that communist society and democratic capitalist society are identical in such things as their approach to political dossiers, the relative independence of state and government from people or thought control in general, but that the existence of political dossiers within a democracy represents a cancer within the body politic. While we have not succumbed completely to this cancer, we came close in the McCarthy days of the early '50s, and our society remains in danger as long as political dossiers are allowed to exist.

My secret life, by the FBI: files of an American leftist

I have been an active socialist all my adult life. I have carried out all my political activity in public, using my own name, writing under my own name in various periodicals, speaking under my own name across the country. My views have been outlined in great detail in print as well as in speeches and have been available to the public. In the course of 30 years of political activity I have never been arrested or accused of violating any law of this country (with the exception of an occasional traffic violation).

I have never been associated with any foreign power. I was a devoted follower of Leon Trotsky and as such was anathema to the Soviet Union and its supporters around the world. I have always opposed terrorism. All the groups with which I have been associated shared a similar view on terrorism. I have, however, been subjected to some 30 years of surveillance by the FBI and other government agencies. It is difficult to calculate the cost of this surveillance to the American public, but I feel it would not be out of line to suggest that the figure exceeded \$1,000,000.

I have spent the past several years writing a memoir that I hope will add a little to the understanding of the history of the American left. In doing so, I became convinced that the story of the American left cannot

fully be told without uncovering the effort of the American government to watch over and intervene against it. Therefore, I decided to attempt to get my FBI files.

I originally requested my FBI files in the spring of 1988. I was informed that August that my file contained "approximately 8,049 pages." In June 1991 I received 802 pages that were excerpted from 1,773 original pages. These appear to be two files: Vol. 1 of File 100-422940 and Supplement 1a of the same file. File 100-422940 is my Washington, D.C., file, but it is made up almost entirely of material forwarded from my New York file.

The files overlap in contents, and it is unclear why there are two files. Both files clearly indicate that an extensive file was developed on me by the Cleveland office and that this office had placed me on their "Security Index." I assume this file covered my activity while at Oberlin College from at least the middle of 1953, when I first became a socialist, until I left for New York City in June 1955. There was also a small file maintained by the Newark office, as I lived in New Jersey during my first year in the New York area. These files were forwarded to New York and then to Washington, but I have not yet received any of them.

Vol. 1 ends with the decision of the FBI to maintain my file. I am owed material for at least the period from 1977 until 1980 (when I dropped out of organized socialist activity) and possibly since that date. It also contains reference to more than 500 pages on me that are in other files, mostly those devoted to specific organizations.

I will be pursuing the missing sections of my files. At the same time, I will reserve the right to appeal the fact that approximately 90 percent of the files so far released to me have been blacked out or withheld in their entirety. I plan to initiate Freedom of Information Act requests with Army Intelligence, Secret Service, the State Department and the CIA.

Preparing for detention: The Internal Security Act (McCarran Act) passed in 1950 included a provision (actually proposed by liberal Senators Hubert Humphrey (D-MN) and Paul Douglas (D-IL) for the mass deten-

tion of "subversives" should the president declare a national emergency. Radicals would be placed in facilities in a manner similar to the treatment of Japanese Americans in World War II. This law legalized a detention program established by the FBI in 1948. The "Security Index" (SI) was set up in order to provide a ready basis for locating potential detainees. The FBI needed to have a photograph, a hand-writing specimen, a home address and a work address for everyone on the list. This information had to be checked at least once a year.

In the mid-'50s, when my name was added to this list, there were almost 13,000 people on the list. (see *The Age of Surveillance*, by Frank Donner, pg. 162 ff.) There was an elite list within the list, called DETCOM (Detention Communist), composed of "key figures" in organizations considered to be "subversive." People who were tabbed DETCOM were to be the first to be picked up when mass raids took place. Those on this list needed to be checked at least once every three months. I made DETCOM in August 1961 when I was elected to the National Committee of the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party.

When I was removed from the SWP National Committee in 1963 because of my role leading a minority faction within that organization, I was removed from DETCOM (I remained on the SI list). In the fall of 1964, when I split from the SWP and formed a little group with only nine members, I once again became a "key figure" and my DETCOM tab was restored.

Congress repealed the detention portion of the McCarran Act in 1971. This meant that the FBI was supposed to abolish the SI. However, the FBI simply changed the name from Security Index to Administrative Index (ADEX) and DETCOM tabbing was replaced by Priority 1. The idea was to keep the file up to date so that should Congress change its mind there would be no delay in the detention process. By 1976 the list had been reduced to 1,250 people.

There is a fascinating section of my files, included in this collection, that covers the 1974-75 period when I broke with the organization I had founded, the Workers League, and the British group that dominated it (Gerry Healy's Socialist Labour League/Workers Revolutionary Party). The New York office of the FBI had read the attacks on me that appeared in the press of the Workers League and accepted them at face value. They therefore recommended that I be removed from the ADEX. Washington protested, pointing out that the SWP supported me, which meant that I remained a dangerous "subversive." Washington prevailed, and I remained on the ADEX. It is unclear from the documentation so far supplied to me exactly what happened after this point, but I can assume that I was one of the 1,250 on ADEX in 1976. The last document I have received, dated July 21, 1976, ends ominously: "Subject's activities continue to warrant further investigation."

Under surveillance: I must say, I am proud of the FBI's observations of my public protest activity: picketing the French consulate in support of the Algerian independence movement; picketing the Soviet consulate to protest Soviet suppression of Hungary; participating in various Vietnam War protests. In this respect, I would not have

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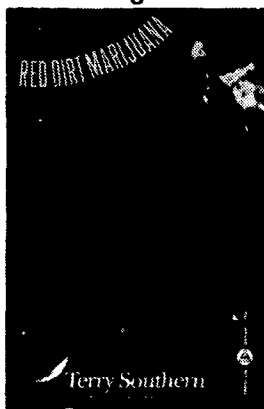
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wanted to live my life in any other way.

Much of the FBI's efforts went into observing and photographing me walking into and out of buildings where, as they well know from their informants, I spent many hours talking, discussing, listening (I would not necessarily wish to repeat every moment of this aspect of my past life). Then there were quarterly telephone calls to my home and to my employer to verify the file information—always, of course, "using a suitable pretext."

There are several interesting documents in this collection. The FBI maintained a photo surveillance of the hallway, next to a pawn shop, on 14th Street in New York City, that led up to the dingy little loft where Max Shachtman and his followers held forth on various aspects of the "Russian question." The angle of the photos suggests that they must have rented a loft across the street and installed an agent with a telephoto lens and camera. Within a year or so of this activity, the organization they were spying on was removed from the attorney general's list. Shachtman and his followers joined the Socialist Party, many of them gravitated to the right within that party, and some even became neo-conservatives.

The most elaborate surveillance in my files was the FBI's stakeout at the SWP's 1957 convention. Some 52 rolls of film were shot from three different locations and the resulting photos circulated to FBI offices throughout the country. Consider the costs involved. I remember Werdermann's Hall as a decrepit, depressing place, a remnant of a German community that had long since deserted an area populated by derelicts and prostitutes. I only spent about an hour there being ushered into a back room for an audience with James P. Cannon, a founder of both American communism and Trotskyism. As I was at the time a leader of a faction of the youth organization of his arch-rival, Max Shachtman, Cannon lectured me on the correctness of his views on the Russian question. It was a depressing gathering of elderly radical workers, most of whom died in the coming years or drifted out of the movement. But, for the FBI, it was prime footage.

In 1957, when the Communist Party was falling apart under the impact of the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party and the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution, one section of the party agreed to hold a dialogue with others on the left. Communists and Trotskyists spoke on the same platform for the first time since 1928. The FBI viewed the whole process as a conspiracy on the part of the CP to form a "broad organization" as a new front group to subvert the nation.

Referrals to other agencies: During 1956 and 1957, I became eligible for induction into the armed services. At the time, the government excluded "subversives" from the draft. I appealed this exclusion as a civil liberties matter. Army Intelligence conducted an investigation and a hearing was held before some Army colonels. I actually won the case, as the government was preparing to drop the Shachtman group from the list. This process produced a lot of exchanges of information between Army Intelligence and the FBI.

Every time any change was made in my SI listing, the Secret Service was informed. The Secret Service considered me a risk to

the life of the president because of my "communist" association and my "strong or violent anti-U.S. sentiment."

Whenever I made a trip abroad, the FBI informed the "Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State" (prior to receiving these files I had never heard of that body) and the "Legal Attaché" in London (sometimes called the "Foreign Liaison Unit"). This attaché was expected to inform British Intelligence, and then a report was supposed to be made back to the FBI. It is my belief that the Legal Attaché was either the station chief of the CIA at the London Embassy or in contact with the station chief and that therefore the CIA has an extensive file on me.

Political assessments and legal justifications: During the early years, the files were justified by the existence of the attorney general's list. Organizations listed were assumed to be "subversive" and those in contact with, or members of, such organizations were subject to inclusion on the SI and possible detention. There was also what can be called the FBI theory of inherited characteristics. If an organization was proven to have descended from a listed group (split away from or created as its youth arm), that organization was assumed to carry the "subversive" gene with it. The gene could pass through several generations of splits and fusions.

However, as time passed, so did the venerable attorney general's list, then the SI, and, I assume, perhaps, even ADEX. Yet the file persisted and grew, now justified as the product of an ongoing investigation into possible violations of the various federal statutes.

None of the groups with which I have been associated has ever been accused of acting in the interests of any foreign government, friendly or hostile to the United

Save the occasional traffic ticket, I have never violated any law. But it would not be out of line to suggest that the FBI has spent \$1,000,000 on its surveillance of me.

States. Neither I, nor anyone I knew, has ever been in a position to act in the interests of a foreign power hostile to the United States. I did not work on atom bombs. The FBI did not accuse any Trotskyists of such things. We were not accused of being terrorists or advocating "the current use of violence."

It appears our "crime" was that *in the future* we would seek "to precipitate a revolution when conditions are ripe and to seize control of the revolution and to direct it when it occurs." We were also considered guilty of making the historical prediction "that eventual violent revolution in the U.S. is inevitable." The FBI was well aware that Trotskyists support the establishment of socialism through democratic means. However, as Marxists, most Trotskyists felt that the ruling power in the society would overthrow democratic institutions if a majority chose socialism. Thus Trotskyists believed the threat of violence would come in the future from government. (Certainly, the

overthrow of the democratically elected government of Allende by a U.S.-backed military junta in Chile some years back suggests that such a scenario is not pure fantasy.

However, this kind of argument has a very unreal ring to it. The government's "prediction" could only have some validity if there is a clear and present danger of revolution in the U.S. This is an absurd notion, and I find it difficult to believe that the government now or at any time felt that revolution was possible in the U.S. The starry-eyed hopes and dreams of these small bands of idealists are being exploited by the government to maintain a mechanism of political thought-control that is used against far broader sections of the population.

For many years, American political life has been poisoned by this concept of the existence of "disloyal," "subversive" and "unpatriotic" political views. The views discussed above were held by a minute section of the population, yet the left in its broadest definition (at times encompassing the majority sentiment of the nation) has been affected and political life in America distorted.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain this view, now that communism has collapsed in the Soviet Union. Yet it would be a grave mistake to think that the "red herring" is no longer used. Just remember all the flag-waving whipped up by the press and utilized by Bush and the right during the Persian Gulf War. The clear implication was that those who did not fervently wave

the flag were somehow suspect, less patriotic, perhaps, yes, tainted with subversive thoughts.

As the recent exposure of FBI COINTELPRO operations against Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) illustrate, the political police remain in place and at work. But it is not enough to oppose the unlawful activity of government agencies who break into offices. It is important to challenge the basis for all this activity, including what can be called passive surveillance.

The very existence of 30 years of surveillance and a dossier on me is a violation of my First Amendment rights as well as my right to privacy. It is not the proper function of government to keep files on people because of their political views, no matter how unpopular those views may be. The existence of such files inhibit political life.

The citizen has a right to privacy, to not be photographed, to not be followed, to not have his garbage picked through, to not be called up under a "suitable pretext," to not be reported on by unidentified informants. There must be a reasonable limit to an investigation for possible violation of dubious statutes that have not been enforced against anyone for decades. Certainly a 30-year investigation is not reasonable.

The Soviet people are now dismantling the KGB. Does the United States government have the capacity to take the more limited step of giving up its political dossiers?

Tim Wohlforth now lives in Oakland, Calif.

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Deborah, Golda and Me: Being Female and Jewish in America

By Letty Cottin Pogrebin
Crown Publishers, 396 pp., \$22

By Eleanor J. Bader

LETTY COTTIN POGREBIN IS A loud, proud Jewish woman. Reared by observant middle-class parents who valued the keeping of family secrets as much as they valued liturgy and ritual, she learned early on about sex roles and religious and ethical responsibilities.

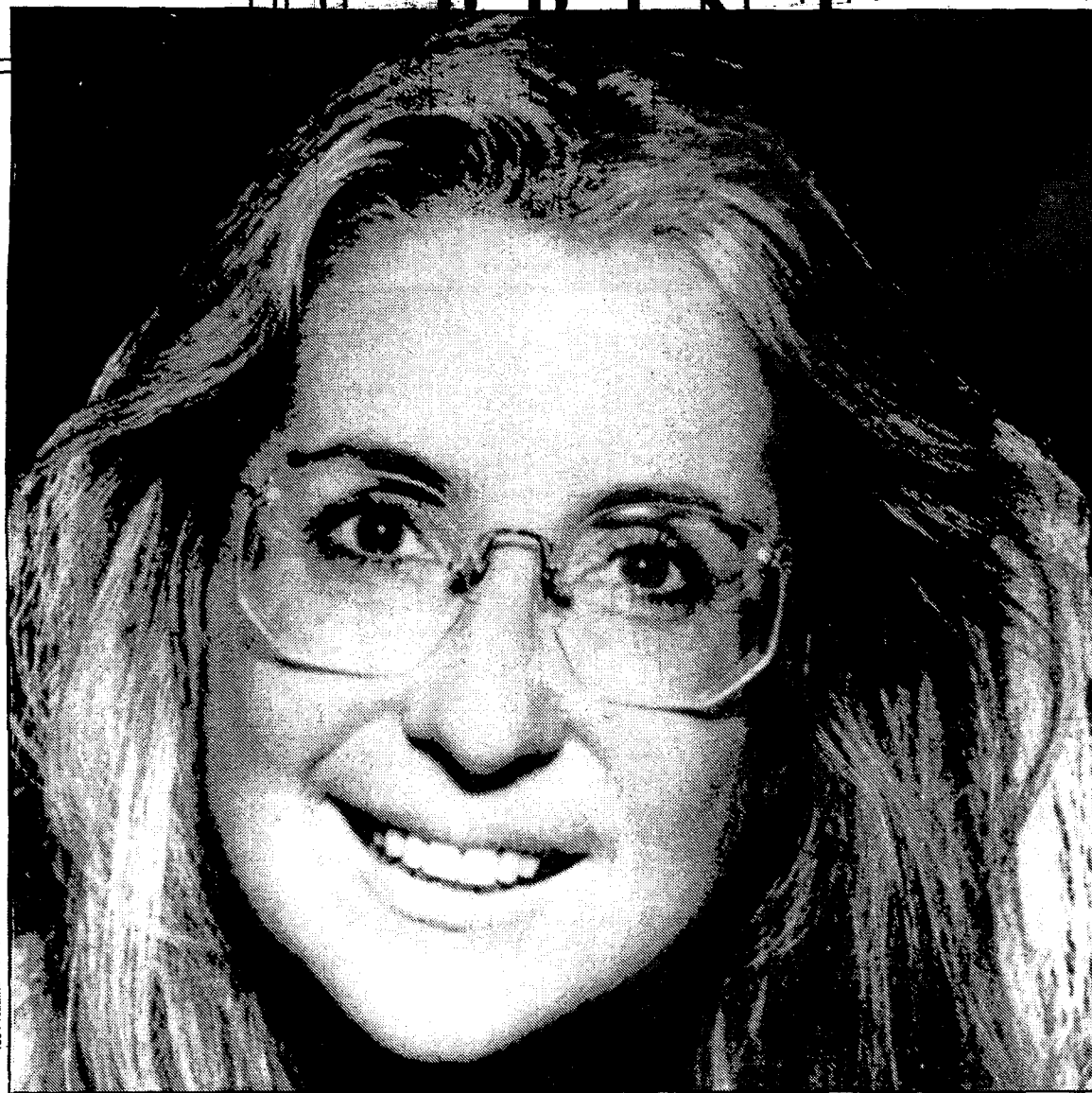
As a young child, she earned the scorn of Hebrew school teachers for thinking with a "boy's head," that is,

WOMEN

persisting in questioning her elders about things spiritual and social. Then, when she was 15, she found herself in an untenable and vulnerable position.

"Jew means man": Jewish tradition mandates the saying of Kaddish, a prayer for the dead, for one year after the passing of a family member. When Ceil, Letty's mother, died, the teenager attempted to join a group of men chanting the ancient memorial. "It didn't matter that I was my father's intellectual heir, my mother's daughter, an educated Jewish student and a Bat Mitzvah girl," she recounts in *Deborah, Golda and Me*. "Jew means man, because males are the only Jews who count. A strange man was called in to say Kaddish for my mother, because he was a 'Jew.' I may as well have been a Christian, Muslim or Druze."

This incident, coupled with Letty's already problematic relationship with her rarely available father, left her bereft of parental direction and furious at a religion that excluded her from full participation in the community. During the next 15 years, from the time she entered Brandeis University until she herself became a mother of three, her gaze was turned to things secular:



Letty Cottin Pogrebin: carving a place for women in a male-dominated tradition.

Reconciling conflicts of the heart and the head

the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement and women's rights.

A founder of *Ms.* magazine, by the early '70s Pogrebin became an energetic leader of second wave feminism. Along the way, she amassed a great deal of data on the sexism infusing Judaism. "Judaism's problem originates in the confusion of the male with the human, and of man with God," she writes. Ritual, too, perpetuates the view of women as Other, as inferior.

In Orthodox synagogues, women sit behind a *mehitzah*, a screen

obscurer them from male congregants, the rabbi and the Holy Ark. During menstruation and after childbirth, women are deemed "ritually unpure," and are required to go to a *mikvah*, or bath, for "purification." Furthermore, while men have prayers offering thanks for everything from well-functioning apertures and orifices to not being born female, women have no parallel sanctifications for childbirth, miscarriage, menarche, menopause or other solely female occurrences.

Foundations of heritage: But

while evidence of sexism within the Jewish community continued to surface, other data also reared its head. With burgeoning interest in women's history came new readings into the roles played by our foremothers in politics, the arts and spiritual life. Pogrebin took strength from their example: Deborah, the prophet, military commander and only woman among the Bible's 13 Judges; Queen Esther of Persia, who used her assertiveness to urge King Ahasuerus to stop the evil Haman from exterminating the Jews; and Judith, who inspired the Maccabean revolt.

Then there was Golda Meir. While Pogrebin ultimately found Meir—a non-feminist who argued that there is no such thing as a Palestinian—a faulty role model, her position as Israeli prime minister at one time heartened Pogrebin. Meir's position also helped the writer identify her politics more squarely and come to terms with the fact that shared gender traits do not always imply sisterhood or a progressive agenda.

Despite Meir's negative example, by the late '70s Pogrebin found herself becoming more and more compelled by Judaism's legacy. One activity crystallized her return to Jewish life: an ad hoc Rosh Hashanah service that Pogrebin led because she was the only one in her beach community who knew the prayers.

But *Deborah, Golda and Me* is more than the telling of one woman's return to the fold. It is a spirited—if at times self-indulgent and self-congratulatory—look at one woman's process in melding "a Jewish heart and a feminist head" into someone wholly dedicated to justice, truth,

equality and freedom.

Along the way, there are many twists and turns, over prayers as well as domestic and international politics. In fact, *Deborah, Golda and Me* is most insightful when it discusses Pogrebin's personal evolution from die-hard Zionist afraid of Arabs and incensed by the U.N. Decade for Women's adoption of a "Zionism is Racism" resolution, to an initiator of dialogue groups between Arab and Jew and a forceful proponent of a two-state solution. Her process—listening to Arab women explain their perspectives on the situation—was born of another feminist experience, one in which Pogrebin and other Jews met with African-Americans to hash out the meanings of color, racial pride and womanhood in disparate lives.

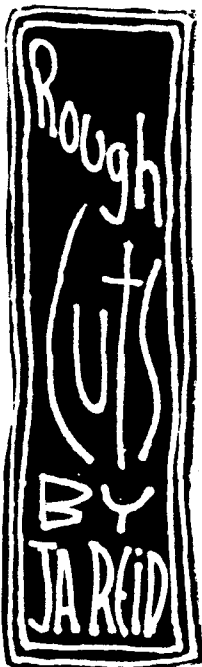
In each situation, Pogrebin was forced to hear things she'd rather not have known—about Jewish landlords and loan sharks in black ghettos and about forced evictions and random violence in both the Occupied Territories and inside the Green Line. "Strange as it sounds," she concludes, "Jews and Palestinians are like partners in an arranged Catholic marriage. Neither partner would have chosen to marry the other, but they can't get a divorce. They're stuck with each other, so they have to learn to make the marriage work."

For the peace process to work, Pogrebin says, there must be some ground rules. She suggests that groups:

- "Not argue about who deserves the land more, but agree that both people deserve a homeland;
- Not argue about who suffered more, but agree that both people have experienced tragedy;
- Not argue about who's to blame, but agree that both people have made mistakes;
- Not argue about who has more reason to distrust, but agree that while both have reason to distrust, both need peace more;
- Not argue about who has killed more, or got killed more, but ensure that there is no more killing."

Power, Pogrebin concludes, has made Israel neither safe nor secure. But while ceding some degree of state power is a start, Pogrebin knows that resolving the conflict goes far deeper, touching long-held and deeply-ingrained prejudices. As a result, she urges Jew and non-Jew alike to go full circle, using feminist process for open-ended dialogue and looking back again to those parts of the Talmud that instill values that will enrich humanity. One particular dictum propels Pogrebin: "It is more important to promote peace than to do nominal justice."

And she tries. ■
Eleanor J. Bader is the assistant dean of the Eugene Lang College, New School for Social Research in New York.



Pollen
Count



And
Countess

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By Carol Tice

EVERY THURSDAY AFTERNOON, three women meet at a beat-up picnic table in a small park south of downtown Los Angeles. It's an unlikely place for a get-together—some of the run-down old Victorian homes around the park are abandoned, and most are branded with graffiti. A handful of adults are stationed on each front porch; no one seems to have a job.

The three women—a slight African-American woman named Mary Henderson and two Latinas, Betty Flores and Vicki Enriquez—stand out because of the supplies they bring to the park in several plain shopping bags. Around here, most people keep their valuables concealed. Locals know this rectangle of short-cropped grass and drab public buildings as a danger zone where drug selling and theft are the primary forms of commerce.

Today, Gwen, a park regular in a flowered polyester outfit, stomps angrily on the grass near the women, talking to herself. "My name is Jesus!" she shouts.

"Let's give her something," Henderson says quietly. Flores takes a package of pantyhose and a pair of earrings out of one bag and approaches Gwen. "I don't want to talk to you!" Gwen shouts, waving menacingly at Flores. Calmly, the women retreat to another bench.

Hard world, soft sell: The pantyhose and earrings are donated gifts that help the women make friends in the neighborhood. Later, Henderson, Flores and Enriquez bring out their other gifts—condoms, bleach kits and brochures that explain in simple language how AIDS is contracted, and how to avoid getting it. The three women are AIDS prevention outreach workers from the Women and AIDS Risk Network (WARN), the only program in Los Angeles County that specifically targets women at high risk for contracting the HIV virus that causes AIDS. Talking to women like Gwen is their job.

Founded in 1986, WARN grew out of a women's recovery program called Prototypes and was one of the first prevention programs in the country to focus on women. Back then, women with AIDS were virtually unknown. Now, more than 18,000 women have been diagnosed with full-blown AIDS nationwide. In cities like New York, AIDS has spread rapidly in the intravenous drug-using population. The risk is doubled for women who work as prostitutes to support their habit. WARN's mission is to prevent a similar AIDS outbreak in high-risk women in Los Angeles.

The women from Prototypes/WARN work a circuit of drug-plagued areas in and around downtown L.A., trying to befriend women and talk to them about AIDS preven-



The women of Prototypes/WARN boldly go where no outreach has gone before.

They dare to care when no one else will

tion. In the year since Mary Henderson and Betty Flores began coming to the small park in South Central, they've made steady progress in getting their message out.

On this dangerous turf, Henderson says, "It took us a long time to really get the trust from these women that we weren't the police, we weren't here to harm them. Now the women really welcome us into this community. We don't pose a threat to them."

A shot of reality: One of the first women Henderson and Flores met in the park was Maxine Tyler, an easygoing African-American woman with a big smile. Tyler says, "From the beginning, it was a good feeling for me, because they were bringing something into the park that we had been needing. There's so many women in this park that use drugs and that sell their bodies for drugs. I was one of the recipients of condoms and bleach, and I also introduced them around."

She still hangs out at the park, but now Tyler works as a WARN volunteer. "During the week, I have condoms and bleach at my house every day in the week, because that's what is needed for AIDS prevention," Tyler says. "And it's rewarding for me, because I'm an active addict and alcoholic. I can relate to the women

we come in contact with. I just feel a part of it."

Tyler gives the women an entree into what Betty Flores calls "a foreign community." In this part of town, safety is defined not by where you are, but who you are with, and whether you are known in the neighborhood.

Vicki Enriquez says, "Today, when I came and met my co-workers, we weren't all here, and when I saw Maxine, I knew I was safe." For Enriquez, working for Prototypes/WARN offers a chance to give of herself. "I've been in [addiction] recovery for a little over three years, so I have a personal investment in the community, with the women of color and women that are at risk because of possibly sharing needles," says Enriquez. "I'm very grateful to be able to go back into the community and educate women."

The women from Prototypes/WARN approach their clients with a non-judgmental attitude, accepting them as they are, but letting them know they do offer referrals for drug treatment. "I can't emphasize enough the philosophy of not trying to push an agenda on the women," says Henderson. "We're just here to be sounding boards until they're ready to make a decision. Some-

times there isn't anything for us to do except educate them to—hopefully—protect themselves. But the success might be six months later when a woman will walk up to us and say, 'Hey, you got that referral for me?'"

Waiting for the rehab man: Betty Flores is frustrated that there is so little drug treatment available. "I would say about 95 percent of the people we get in contact with really

WOMEN

want to stop using drugs," she says, "but unfortunately, there's a big waiting list. There are only two main treatment centers in L.A., and people

The women from Prototypes/WARN approach their clients with gifts and a non-judgmental attitude—but they let them know they do drug treatment referrals.

really get discouraged.

"To be honest, I just feel like the government really doesn't care and is not doing enough," Flores adds. Prototypes/WARN fought a four-year battle to get approval from the L.A. County Board of Supervisors to distribute bleach and condoms. In the last few months, with help from newly-elected Supervisor Gloria Molina, county funds were finally allotted for the program. Before then, only Mary Henderson, who is funded on a California state grant, could hand out bleach and condoms. Flores and Enriquez could only distribute brochures.

Most of the AIDS prevention advocates' time is spent just hanging out in the park, listening to the women's problems. "The job," says Mary Henderson, "is not just to get numbers. The job is to let women know that we care."

One of their long-time clients is Juanita Ramirez, who sends her three-year-old daughter over to play with Maxine Tyler while she goes in the bathroom, a favorite spot for crack users. "I'm like the park babysitter," Tyler says proudly. "I'd rather see them come over where I am, where there's not drug usage. It's enough they see needles laying

Continued on following page

Continued from preceding page

around the park. A lot of times we find needles and have to break the points off so the kids won't get in them."

When Ramirez returns, she talks for a long time about her troubles—she's on a methadone program, and she lost two other daughters to foster care while she was in prison. She's a short, articulate woman with a variety of tattoos and an angry knife scar that somehow spared her left eye. The women give her nail polish and earrings for her daughter, lipstick and condoms for herself. When Ramirez expresses doubts about how she handled a problem with her daughter, Flores assures her, "You're a good mother."

When Henderson and Flores first arrived in the park, Ramirez says, "I

thought it was nice for them to come here—especially into a dangerous area—and put themselves out for the safety of women who are endangering themselves to AIDS. Most people around here are drug addicts, thieves, robbers.... but when they see the women coming, they say, 'There's the AIDS ladies.' They're pretty well known."

A rocky road: While the women are talking, Gwen stalks over to the group, shouting incoherently. They tolerate the outburst until Gwen takes out her hypodermic needles (known on the street as "outfits" or "rigs") and starts waving them around in front of Ramirez' daughter.

"Get out of here with those outfits," Tyler says, disgusted.

"I'm not hiding nothing from that child!" Gwen snaps.

When it's clear Gwen is too high to respond rationally, the group simply moves away. Soon Gwen is fast asleep on a bench, her feet draped over the backrest, her head hanging a few inches off the ground.

"Her mother died and she had a nervous breakdown," Maxine Tyler explains to the others. "When she stays up all night smoking rocks and don't take her medication, she gets like that. But she's a good person. Tomorrow she'll apologize to me."

At the end of each day, the four women visit a roofed, partially-enclosed area in the center of the park where the picnic tables are thick with people buying, selling and doing drugs. Here danger hangs in the air like mist. The women gather at the entrance for a few minutes, moving slowly, letting the inhabit-

ants know they've arrived. Then they step inside. A crowd quickly gathers around them while they hand out condoms and bleach. When they run out of supplies, they leave.

Incredibly, the women seem unafraid. "Once inside, it's like we're in our own," says Flores, "and it's OK, because people start recognizing us."

"They're real receptive to us. They say, 'Ayyy! It's the AIDS ladies,'" Henderson says. "They're used to our schedule. If we come on a Wednesday, they'll look up and say, 'It's Thursday already!'"

For some of the addicts in the park, the women from Prototypes/WARN are the only constant in their lives, the event they tell time by. But funding for AIDS prevention has been steadily declining at every level

of government, imperiling the work of federal, state, county and city grants that fund the WARN program. Soon Mary Henderson, Betty Flores and Vicki Enriquez may not be able to meet Maxine Tyler in the park every Thursday and give the women there the supplies and information they need to lower their risk of getting AIDS.

"So far we haven't had any funding cutbacks," says Ruth Slaughter, the director of Prototypes/WARN's AIDS prevention division. "But it's going to happen. Right now, we're a lot more conscientious about how we're spending. Sometimes we're unable to obtain literature. Who knows how long we'll be able to carry on?"

Carol Tice is *In These Times'* Los Angeles correspondent.

IN THE ARTS

By Mary Dowd

SOMETIMES IT SEEMS LIKE THE whole concept of the swing and heat of hip-hop culture goes hand in hand with obsessive male idolization and homophobia. The result is a constant moralizing about obscenity and censorship that somehow sells records for the artists involved. Eventually the controversy between an authentic view of black culture and issues of free speech gets a little tired, even for the most die-hard critic. Over the past few years, it seems to be that the hardcore successful rappers mount an invisible soapbox ranting their frustrations over the loss of manhood rather than make any political challenge.

But maybe these tired clichés about rap are about to change in the form of Hiphopcrisy, a radical rap group emerging out of the San Francisco Bay Area. Michael Franti and percussionist Rono Tse (formerly of the Beatnigs) are vying to change the pulp stereotypes in rap music.

Franti, a strapping six-foot-six, and his partner Rono are not aiming to conquer the hip-hop mainstream or whine over the maligned images of black men. Franti observed: "I am not opposed to NWA as artists. I am against misogyny and I am against homophobia. I am against some of the things that are standard to rap. What particularly bothers me is that they [NWA] say that the words don't have any effect on them. Then some of the members of the group begin beating up women publicly. It is perpetuating the myth that women are bitches and whores. I can't understand the hypocrisy that black men could say that kind of stuff about women. They are against the oppression of black men and they do it to black women. My record company says the same thing...the public buys this."

Unsurprisingly, the intent of



Bay Area beat: Rono Tse and Michael Franti of Hiphopcrisy.

Hiphopcrisy beats a brand new trail

Hiphopcrisy and their current single, "Television," is to educate rather than to intimidate. Both Franti and Rono are conscious of how easy it is to preach political correctness but how much more difficult it is to put those same ideas in practice. "In the Beatnigs, we found that a lot of things that the band were talking about weren't put into effect in our personal lives. The treatment of other people was not good. We were talking about wanting the world to be a better place but couldn't make a decent relationship."

Racism is a sickness: Yet Franti is not without a sense of frustration and urgency in his music. In-

deed, Hiphopcrisy's radical philosophy stems from Franti's struggle to embrace his own interracial background. "Racism is a disease like alcoholism. First of all, I define racism as a way people have power over other people. The problem with young black men is that they feel that all the problems of a racist society fall on them. I don't feel that I am some kind of aberration or have something lacking. I feel that I am a human being. The conditions under which I was given up for adoption were racist. My mother is white, my father is black. My father wasn't going to marry my mother. My grandfather was a straight-up racist. I am a product of an inter-

racial relationship, and I am also a product of racism as it exists today."

Indeed, Franti feels that some of the new generation of black films;

RAP

such as *Boyz n the Hood* and *Jungle Fever* stigmatize and reinforce an unhealthy critical climate. "I can't

Moving beyond stale stereotypes of flash and glitter.

say that I was happy about them. I was happy that black men had the opportunity to express themselves. ... I felt that *Jungle Fever* was about the black man's fascination with the sexuality of white women and the fallacies that the media has placed on this. The fact that white and black people could not have a relationship together which is caring, reinforces separatism. I think we live in a society which is a multicultural society, and we should encourage people of different races and cultures to live together."

Franti understands that the prospects for most black youth making it in the music business are "equivalent to them becoming a brain surgeon." As a result, Franti and his cohorts don't have too much time for the traditional rap stereotypes of flash and glitter accompanied by derogatory images of women or the "pull yourself up by the bootstraps" mentality of Clarence Thomas and others.

"When you look at the odds that the average black man has to be successful, they are miniscule. There is a whole psychology that you can have a lot of people leave the ghetto, when the reality is they can either go through sports or through entertainment or drugs. The way out is for people to notice what is happening to them."

Neither do Hiphopcrisy simply sample rock classics with contemporary rhymes. Unlike most rappers, they play instruments and their musicianship can hold its own beside their powerful lyrics. "I want to address what I have seen in my own life, being someone who is concerned with music and politics. In doing that, I ignored the people who were closest to me, my family. In doing this record, I am trying to make amends to those people in my life."

But he admits, "It is hard to try working in an industry that doesn't have a conscience."

Mary Dowd is a writer living in San Francisco.

Friendly Fascism

Consolidated
I.R.S. Records

Peaceful Journey

Heavy D. & the Boyz
MCA Records

By Mark G. Judge

ARE YOU MOTHERFUCKERS ready," a bemused and shiftless voice drones on the first cut of Consolidated's *Friendly Fascism*, "for the...liberal, vegetarian, pro-choice, lesbian and gay support motherfuckers from San Francisco? Y'all ready? Well, make some motherfuckin' noise for Consolidated...."

This opening soundbite is lifted from one of Consolidated's live gigs and is the funniest thing I've heard

RAP

from any PC flag-wavers since Jello Biafra compared Robert McFarlane to Maxwell Smart. The Bay Area rap trio is relentlessly PC and proud of it, and that's what makes the heavy lassitude in the voice that commences *Friendly Fascism* so ironic: either Consolidated was 49th on a bill of 50 that afternoon or the poor bastard that introduced them just didn't care. And not caring is what Consolidated hates.

Or rather, *one* of the things Consolidated hates. The opening MC is right: they *are* liberal, vegetarian, pro-choice, lesbian and gay support motherfuckers, and their loathing of the New Right and its grinning repression—Poppy stumbling around for the cameras on the back nine—is palpable. It's also very funny; unlike many of their peers in the genre, Consolidated knows how to not only sneer at the conglomerate state but to laugh at themselves. ("This isn't worth five bucks," one disillusioned fan sulks in "Crusading Rap Guys.")

Popping off: Angry young men with musical instruments is nothing new, of course, but Consolidated deftly wed progressive indictments of America's cultural detritus with big industrial rap beats, noise and soundbites culled from the media. The message emerges fresh and funky: the good ol' U.S.A. is stoned, strung out, violent, sexist, racist, addicted, crude, selfish, ignorant and going straight down the crapper. It's attitude rap for radicals. The beats are big, the leftist sloganeering plentiful and the verdict damning—even if the gavel slams against the three white rappers themselves.

That's right, they're white. White and working in the pop music industry, a haven for the fleeting and superficial. According to hard-core lefties and rap purists, that's at least one strike, and the irony isn't lost on the group. They call themselves "nauseating middle-class white guys in a political band" and declare on "Unity of Oppression" that "the history of oppression...we can't erase it in a pop song."

Maybe not, but these three can

Consolidated and Heavy D. give peace, and PC, a chance



Consolidated: Adam Sherburne, Philip Steir, Mark Pistel.

make things pretty uncomfortable for beer-swiggin', Desert Stormin' couch taters—and even for the self-proclaimed avant-garde. (The group—Adam Sherburne, Philip Steir, Mark Pistel—also make it tough on critics by not including their names on CD or press release.) On the alternative radio lampoon "College Radio," they abruptly switch genres from rap to folksy R.E.M.-inspired jangle and needle love-dovey campus "liberals," while "Typical Male" attacks "the pseudo feminist [who] still oppresses by including his own self-serving patriarchal agenda" into the women's movement. Most of the time Consolidated's pies find their target,

but the end result could make even the Democratic Socialists of America feel like sellouts. There's no political latitude, no room for the odd indulgence (they'd reject me for liking the new remix of "My Name is Not Susan" by the heretofore banned-for-life Whitney Houston). But even Consolidated themselves, a triumvirate of PC righteousness, occasionally come up with a dangerously narrow-minded howler.

Chill of jackboots: Granted, when George Will's "Morning in America" speech slithers to the fore on "Friendly Fascism," my blood goes cold with the echo of jackboots. But when a member of the group starts railing

against the Bible, I hear the same echo. He claims that "the Bible is a book that has fucked up the world more than any other single book, [a] book that was written by a bunch of male chauvinists." I have problems with fundamentalism and the Crusades, but I also feel that the Bible is a book with parts of fine philosophy and beauty, and Harold Bloom has argued in *The Book of J* that the Book of Genesis was penned by a woman. Christianity brought us the Inquisition, but it also inspired Mother Theresa.

But maybe I'm splitting hairs. (Then again, maybe that's exactly what the band wants—to get the wheels between your ears moving.) In our age of diminishing expectations, *Friendly Fascism* is a rigorous blast of common purpose that makes it meaningful and even fun to be a leftist. If Consolidated leads the revolution, it'll be one you can dance to. Here's hoping white middle-class male Christians are invited to the party.

On the more libidinous side, here comes Heavy D., "the rap register that flows with cash." He's smooth as a lollipop and big as William "The Refrigerator" Perry, and I'd hate to be a waiter when he and George Foreman are in town the same night. "You're a Chicken McNugget and I'm a Big Mac," the Jamaican-born Heavster informed us on 1989's tuneful *Big Tyme*, but he's about as menacing as a teddy bear, and inside he's all suave moves and peacenik philosophy. *Peaceful Journey* is the gentler side of rap that the talk show hosts ignore, the friendly handshake as opposed to the gun-toting menace of NWA and the Ghetto Boys.

Most rappers tend to shoot their load by the fourth or fifth song of an album, but Heavy D.—with the help of six top-notch producers—has come up with one of the tightest rap releases of the year. Sure, the Heavster has hubris—no homeboy can make it without some degree of "street knowledge"—but it's intelligent pride suffused with a refreshing respect for women. ("It's hell to be black," he says on "Sister Sister," "but it's hell to be a black lady.")

Heavy's wise to have healthy admiration for the fairer sex, because they provide some of the more transcendent moments on *Peaceful Journey*. Tammy Lucas' backing vocal on "Is it Good to You?" is beautifully lilting, and the sultry cries of "sweet sweet sweet sweet" on "The Lover's Got What You Need" could make the most rigorous celebrate turn to jello. But perhaps the finest moment on *Peaceful Journey*, indicative of the Heavster's lofty ideals and heartfelt humanism, is the rising backup vocal on the title cut. The message is simple—"stop the killing"—but the effect is genuinely inspiring. Like most rap CD's, one or two tracks should have been cut ("Do Me," "Don't Curse"), but most of *Peaceful Journey* is an ebullient, uplifting workout that keeps your feet moving.

Mark G. Judge is thinking of changing his name to "The Judge-ster."

IN THESE TIMES OCT. 2-8, 1991, 21

A new album by Consolidated, "nauseating middle-class white guys in a political band," followed by Heavy D.'s hubris and heartfelt humanism.

Arms control

Continued from page 3

struction. Beyond the Middle East, France proposed applying this method globally and Britain renewed its call for the United Nations to register all conventional arms transfers—an idea endorsed by a new U.N. study. A communiqué issued by the five warned that "indiscriminate transfers of military weapons and technology contribute to regional instability."

But the chasm between rhetoric and action was highlighted by a recent report from the U.S. Congressional Research Service that documents the flow of arms to the Third World. A sharp drop in Soviet arms sales and an even sharper rise in U.S. sales over the last two years has placed the U.S. at the top of arms suppliers' chart for the first time since 1983. In 1990, the U.S. sold \$18.5 billion of arms to the Third World (more than double its 1989 sales) and the Soviet Union sold \$12.1 billion last year. China, France and Britain filled out the top five. It should be no surprise that the top two Third World arms purchasers between 1983 and 1990 were Saudi Arabia (\$57.3 billion) and Iraq (\$30.4 billion). The overall total of Third World arms purchases for those years was \$301.7 billion.

Although reducing the flow of arms to the Third World is an admirable aim, there are problems with the current approach. One is that the focus on arms sales ignores the question of domestic production and use of weapons. It also overlooks arms transfers that are given as free military aid. And by limiting attention to Third World buyers, the big five perpetuate the dishonest distinction

between "responsible" and "irresponsible" military machines.

The wrong chemistry: While all of the plans so far discussed are designed to curb the spread of certain weapons or deal with arms control in a particular region, only the U.N.-sponsored negotiations in Geneva are aiming for a total ban on an entire category of mass-destruction weapons—in this case, chemical weapons. But the already glacial pace of the Geneva talks stopped completely during the Gulf War while everyone waited to see if two of the countries with the largest stockpiles of such arms—the U.S. and Iraq—would use them against each other. When none were used, a new urgency entered into the talks. Everyone seemed intent on avoiding another potentially disastrous showdown.

In May, Washington made an extraordinary move. President Bush dropped his demand that the U.S. be allowed to maintain a stockpile of chemical weapons during the 10 years the treaty would take to enter into force. The previous U.S. demand was rightly seen as an attempt to dilute a total ban. But when Bush reversed himself and called for the completion of the treaty by the end of the year, it seemed briefly as if that would be a real possibility.

By September, however, the White House had again reversed its position. The U.S. told the Geneva negotiators that it wanted the treaty to include less intrusive verification measures. For the ban to mean anything, however, inspectors must be allowed broad inspection powers. A rigid and intrusive system to ensure against cheating is vital, since the chemicals and the factories that produce them can easily have military and legitimate

civilian uses. One of the reported reasons for the U.S. reversal was to protect the chemical secrets involved in the stealth technology of the B-2 bomber, demonstrating again a White House aversion to any arms-control agreement that does not allow the U.S. an escape clause.

As the White House negotiations over the chemical weapons ban show, the U.S. arms-control strategy is limited to controlling certain types of weapons or developments in certain regions. This policy serves the administration's not-so-hidden agenda of making the world safe for the projection of U.S. military power.

Since international relations in the post-Cold War world continue to be in flux, it is too soon to know if the bi-polar world of the Cold War is giving way to a uni-polar U.S. order. On balance, the arms-control record of the last five months is cause for optimism, but the serious problem remains that those who could and should do the most are doing the least. As long as there is no pressure on the U.S. to make some of the sacrifices it wishes others to shoulder, all the world's good intentions and imaginative initiatives will lead to the same dead end.

Jim Wurst is a journalist specializing in disarmament and security issues.

C A L E N D A R

Use the Calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is **\$25.00 for one insertion, \$35.00 for two insertions and \$15.00 for each additional insert**, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of **ITT Calendar**.

NEW YORK

October 4-20

THE NEW YORK MARXIST SCHOOL

Friday, Oct. 4—Leo Panitch, *Beyond Communism and Social Democracy: Rethinking Socialist Strategy* (lecture), 7 p.m.; \$8.

Saturday, Oct. 5—Leo Panitch, *Left Democracy and the Challenge to the State* (intensive seminar), 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; \$65 (includes previous evening's lecture).

Jaz Dorsey, *Playwriting for Marxists* (first of 8 workshops), 1:30 p.m.; \$80.

TOPLAB—Theater of the Oppressed Laboratory, IM-AGES: A Participatory Performance, 7:30 p.m.; \$7.

Sunday, Oct. 6—Jeffrey Schanzer (concert), 5 p.m.; \$5.

Monday, Oct. 7—Daniel Keane, *Volume I of Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* by Karl Marx (first of 10 classes), 6 p.m.; \$95.

Jeremy Raw, *Foundations of Marxism* (first of 10 classes), 6 p.m.; \$95.

Thursday, Oct. 10—Stanley Aronowitz, *The Political Significance of Class in the United States* (lecture, postponed from Oct. 8), 8 p.m.; \$6.

Sunday, Oct. 13—Bruce Kayton, *Radical Walking Tour of the Lower East Side* (meets at the cube at Astor Place) 1 p.m.; \$6.

Diasporic Development (poetry/discussion), 2 p.m.; \$5.

Upcoming Intensive Seminars: Oct. 17-20, Terry Eagleton, *Marxism, Aesthetics and Morality*; Nov. 14-17, Boris Kagarlitsky, *Perestroika, Society and the Limits to Capitalization in the Soviet Union*; Dec. 2-4, Luciana Castellina, *1992 and Left Politics in Europe*.

Unless specified, all events take place at The New York Marxist School, 79 Leonard St. (5 blocks below Canal St. between Church St. and Broadway), New York, NY 10013. Scholarships are available for low-income people. For more information, call (212) 941-0332.

October 17

The Campaign for Peace and Democracy will host a forum on "Environmental Activism in Post-Communist Czechoslovakia." Speakers will include Juraj Zamkovsky and Helena Forrova, members of the Slovak Union of Nature and Landscape Conservation, and David Hunter, attorney with the Center for International Environmental Law in Washington, D.C., and former environmental consultant in Czechoslovakia. Admission free, 6:45 p.m., Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, 15 Union Square West, 6th Floor. For details, contact: CPD, P.O. Box 1640, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025. Tel: (212) 666-5924.

MILWAUKEE

October 4

Mobilization for Survival sponsors "From 'New World' to 'New World Order': Celebrating 500 Years of Resistance." Food, music, keynotes: Hugo Blanco of Peru, Menominee activist Ingrid Washinawatok, Camille Odeh of Palestinian Women's Associations. Plymouth Church, 2717 E. Hampshire, 6-9 p.m. National Convention, Oct. 5-6, East Troy, WI. Information: (414) 964-5158.

CHICAGO

October 5

The Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America celebrates 10 years of Solidarity with the People of Central America and looks forward to the challenges ahead. You are cordially invited to dinner, honors and awards and dancing to WXRT disc jockey Terri Hemmert. Saturday, Oct. 5, 6-12 p.m. at the Unitarian Church of Evanston, 1330 Ridge Ave., Evanston. Suggested donation \$15 per person. Table for 10: \$135. Parking available. For tickets or information, contact the Chicago Religious Task Force on

Central America, 59 E. Van Buren, #1400, Chicago, IL 60605, (312) 663-4398.

October 5

MEDIA UNDER FIRE: A ROUNDTABLE OF AUTHORS & JOURNALISTS discussing the muzzling of the media and the role of independent media today will take place on Saturday, Oct. 5, at 4 p.m. at the Guild Complex at the Hot House, 1569 N. Milwaukee Ave. Among the many featured editors and journalists included are Micah Sifry, *The Nation* and *Gulf War Reader*; Laura Washington, *Chicago Reporter*; James Weinstein, *In These Times*; Leslie Willis, *Peoples Tribune*; and Ken Davis, WBEZ-Radio. Don't miss it! This special roundtable is part of the Banned Book Week running from Sept. 28 through Oct. 5. Interested persons may obtain additional information by calling the Hot House at 278-2210 or Guild Books (2456 N. Lincoln Ave.) at 525-3667.

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

AT BOULDER

October 4-6

The Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC) will host **COMMON GROUND**, the third annual national student environmental conference. Thousands of students will gather at *Common Ground* to prepare for the next generation of environmental campaigns and battles. *Common Ground* will focus on diversifying the environmental movement, placing a global perspective on our grass-roots campaigns and developing student leadership. The conference will feature professional and student leaders from both the environmental and social-justice movements. Confirmed speakers include David Brower (chairperson, Earth Island Institute), Heather Booth (founder, Midwest Academy), and Pat Bryant (director, Gulf Coast Tenants Association). Also invited are Noel Brown (N. American director, U.N. Environmental Programme), Howard Zinn (author, *People's History of the United States*), and Tony Mazzocchi (president, Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers). The national conference is vital in the attempt to strengthen the student environmental movement, according to *Common Ground* Co-Chair Jeannette Galanis. "With so many people across the country fighting for the preservation of the Earth, strong networking and widespread coordinating is crucial to the success of our efforts." For registration information, please call (303) 440-5290 or write *Common Ground*, 862 17th St., Boulder, CO 80302.

DALLAS

November 14-16

WHO KILLED JFK? Authors, experts, eyewitnesses explore unanswered questions. Featured speakers include Jim Marrs, Robert Groden, John Davis, Dr. Cyril E. Wecht, Jim Moore and J. Gary Shaw. Nov. 14-16, Hyatt Regency, Dallas. A.S.K. For more information and brochure, call (512) 445-8390.

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December 5-15

HEALTH DELEGATION TO HAITI. Visit health centers, meet health workers and policymakers, learn the history of health and politics in Haiti. NCAHRN/Links, 853 Broadway, Suite 416, NYC 10003. (212) 420-9635.

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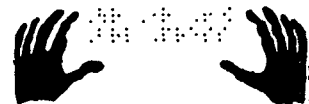
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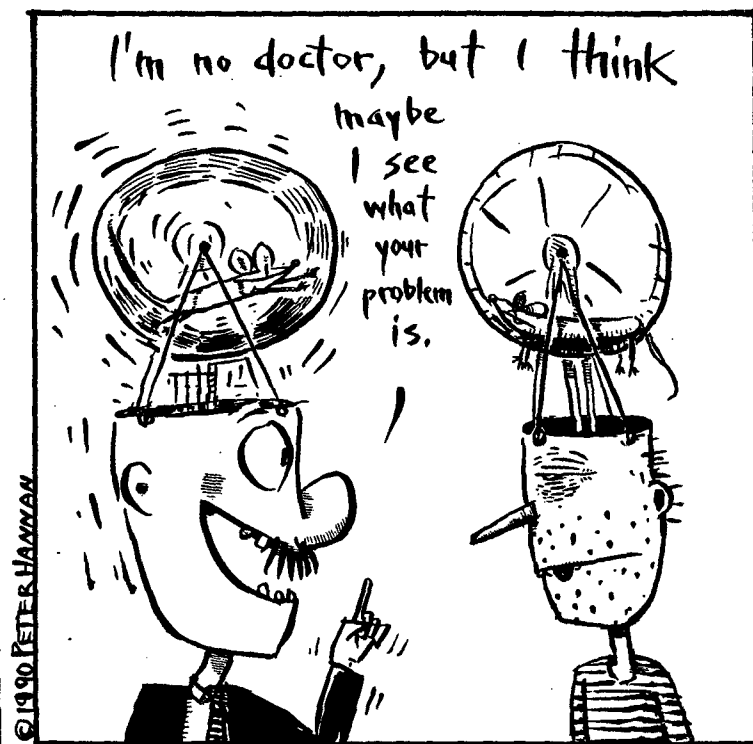
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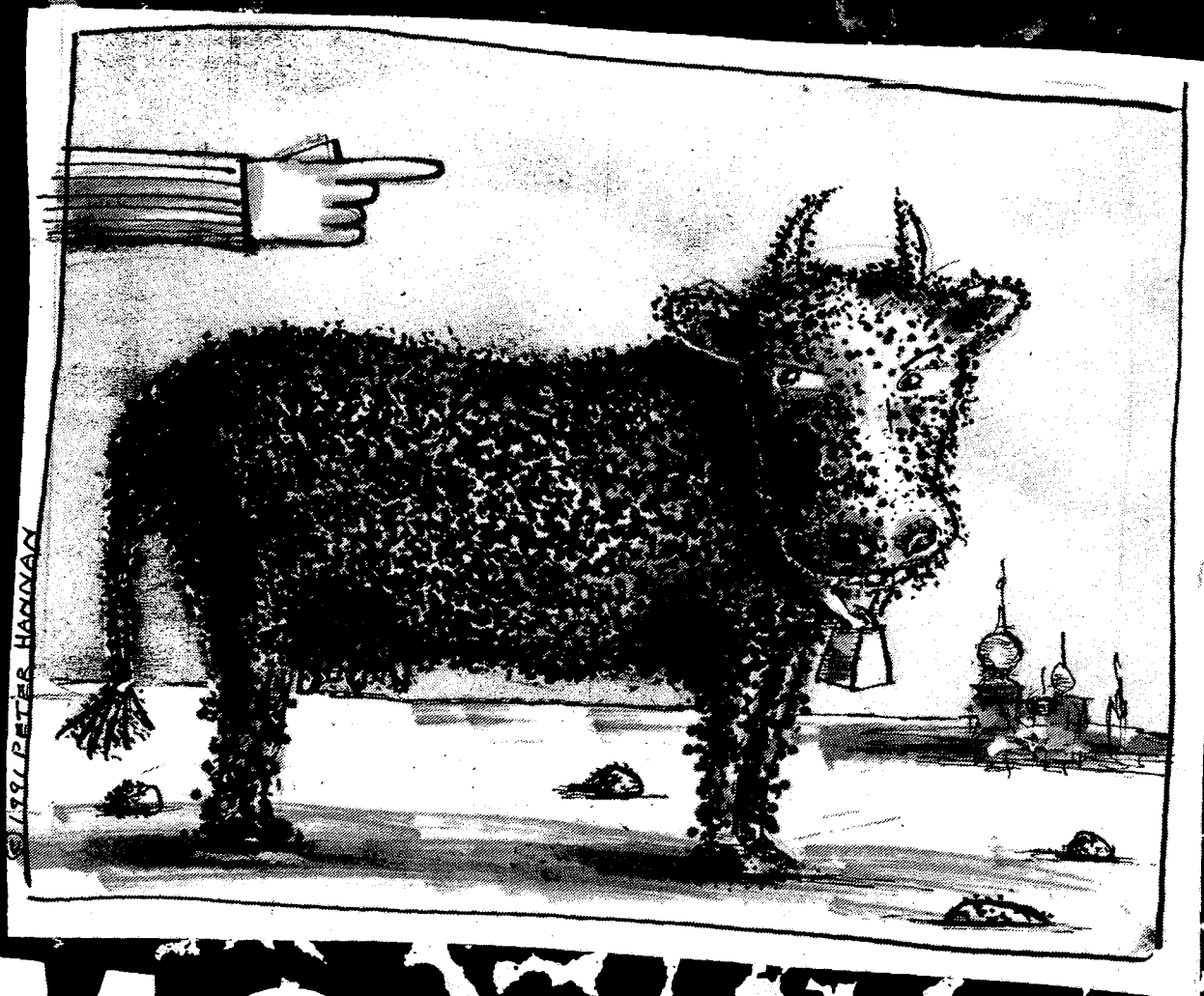
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MOSCOW:

Whims of Change

By Jeff Reid

A few months ago, a friend asked if I'd noticed the pronounced change in Moscow. I assumed she meant the glasnost thing—the burgeoning democracy and rigid institutional resistance that came to a head in the recent failed coup.

But, no. She was onto something else. When she said pronounced change, she meant *pronounced* change. It wasn't what journalists and experts were saying about Moscow, it was how they were saying it. Specifically, how they said the word, "Moscow." She insisted that where once the Russian capital had been spoken "moss cow" as per Webster's, it was now increasingly rendered "mus go," by commentators on public radio and commercial TV.

Curious though it initially seemed, in the weeks that followed I observed that she was right. Moscow occurred less and less frequently. Indeed, by the time of the coup,

"Mus go" was triumphant and "Moss cow" was as dead as Lenin.

Why this mysterious shift? If we put ourselves in the reporters' shoes, an explanation suggests itself. Viewed from the journalists' perspective, an assignment in Moscow, until fairly recently, was about as desirable as, well, a cow covered in moss. When Gorbachov thawed out the Cold War with his reforms, however, the Soviet Union became a hot assignment, a "must go." As a Moscow posting became increasingly attractive to reporters, there was an apparent linguistic leak from meaning to pronunciation.

Surprisingly, given the freedom-loving instincts of our press corps, there was nothing democratic about this pronunciation coup. Nobody debated or voted for "mus go," no secret presidential "findings" were signed authorizing the change after the fact, no sham central committee was even consulted. Any way you look at it, the legitimacy of the established order (the dictionary) was blatantly undermined without any kind of due process. Things changed because the authorities said so.

In a way, this isn't so different from how the rest of the news from the second Russian Revolution came to us. One need only think of the reports during the coup of how "No matter what happens from here on in, Gorbachov will never be back." When, a few hours later, has-been Gorby celebrated a triumphal return, scant mention was made of the previous authoritative and completely erroneous reports. (Also, for those keeping score at home, Boris Yeltsin has been a flamboyant hero of democracy seven times and a hard-drinking ideologue six times—which makes him a hero of democracy, for now, though he may once again at any moment become an unreliable, tipsy security risk.)

Considering the shifting global balance of power and the fickle winds of pronunciation, perhaps we should ponder the possibility of similar changes at home. What if Washington, which has always been properly pronounced like 2,000 pounds of dirty laundry, suddenly became known as Washing-done, the clean-scrubbed capital? Revolutionary as it might sound, perhaps we could help usher in an era in which government would clean up its act, domestically speaking, and do something for the American people.

This change seems unlikely, however, given that the press and the president have repeatedly expressed their strong preferences for foreign affairs. And so, in ironic contrast to the bottom-up revolution occurring in the Soviet Union, we sit here and take it—passive victims of remote control. If the experts say we must go, then we must go—on to the next global hot-spot. The pronounced change in Moscow probably isn't the end of history, but it seems like more evidence of a growing electronic amnesia.

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